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ABSTRACT

The Experience-Based Career Education (EBCE) program was designed to provide on-site vocational experiences for high school youth in order to promote career development skills and knowledge, and knowledge of one's own interests, abilities, and values. The following skills were also emphasized: reading, problem solving, oral communication, writing, interpersonal relationships, basic mathematics, and maturation. Aimed primarily toward program replicators, this evaluation of the EBCE program in Charleston, West Virginia, systematically describes the overt and covert structures of the program, and compares its actual operations with its theoretical design. An ethnographic approach was used to study the behavior of program participants: students, staff, and others. The research began with the construction of a model of the social structure, and continued with efforts to get to know the students. As intimacy with a group of students increased, the school's covert structure emerged. The final phase of the research included interviews with students and staff. Several issues of concern to EBCE replicators are highlighted: the student's attitude toward the program at the time of entry; the student-learning coordinator relationship; and work experience placements. The experiences of three EBCE students are described. (BW)

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EXPERIENCE-BASED CAREER EDUCATION IN CHARLESTON, WEST VIRGINIA: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

BY

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AND

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EXTERNAL EVALUATOR'S FINAL REPORT ON THE EXPERIENCE-BASED CAREER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Volume II

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EXTERNAL EVALUATOR'S FINAL REPORTS ON THE EXPERIENCE-BASED CAREER EDUCATION PROGRAM

Volume I	Summary Evaluation of Four Experience-Based Career Education Schools
Volume II	Experience-Based Career Education in Charleston, West Virginia: An Anthropological Perspective
Volume III	Experience-Based Career Education in Oakland, California: An Anthropological Perspective
Volume IV	The Academy for Career Education: An Ethnographic Evaluation
Volume V	An Ethnographic Account of $(CE)_2$: Experience-Based Career Education in Tigard, Oregon
Volume VI	Student Outcomes and Participant Opinions in Experience-Based Career Education Schools
Volume VII	Search for and Development of Instruments Measuring Student Outcomes of Experience-Based Career Education Programs
Volume VIII	Behavioral Observations at Far West School: A Description of Experience-Based Career Education
Volume IX	Experience-Based Career Education: An Interorganizational Analysis

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Ethnography is not yet a staple item in evaluation studies. For that reason we take the opportunity offered by a preface to indicate why an ethnographic investigation figures so prominently among the third-party studies of Experience-Based Career Education.

The term "ethnography" lies within the discipline of anthropology. At its simplest, an ethnography is a description of the way people "behave" in a particular culture or environment. The emphasis is on an holistic view. In the instance of the EBCE studies, the focus of investigation is on the participants (students, staff, and others) at four development sites. Particular reference is made in the EBCE ethnographies as to how the participants behave and, to some extent, why they behave in that way.

In the study of Experience-Based Career Education, this focus was invaluable. Many features of EBCE and the EBCE objectives were not amenable to measurement by instruments which existed before this study began or which could be constructed within the duration of the third-party study. On the other hand, an ethnographer, living and working as a participant-observer at the EBCE development sites, could provide a detailed description of what was actually happening in the operation of the four systems, indicate what was working well and where some problems still seemed to exist, and describe (through case study material) the rewards and satisfactions that came to those who participated in the program.

One of the questions that the ethnographers were directed to investigate in their studies was: What is the real program like in comparison to the paper version? By contrasting their own observations with written program planning documentation, the ethnographers were able to respond to this question. We believe that such observations and contrasts will be of particular value to those who may be interested in adopting or replicating any of the four EBCE systems. However, we caution readers against interpreting these discussions of discrepancies between intended and actual operations of program features as meaning that all discrepancies have negative consequences, or occur as a result of inadequate program administration. In experimental programs such as these, it is useful to have information about the evolution of program features, and each change and deviation from the originally planned treatment should be examined on its own merits. Discrepancies can be positive, negative, or neutral.

If the project director's original expectations have been met, the description is provided in such a way that each reader becomes his own evaluator. The ethnographies are not evaluations or evaluative in the sense that is customarily meant. In describing what is going on, both the intended and unintended structures, processes, and outcomes, and in studying what it is that participants expect or feel ought to be happening, the ethnographer provides a glass through which potential adoptors and others can view -- even though darkly -- these educational systems. The description is intended to allow the reader to decide for himself how he would evaluate what he sees.

Readers will immediately perceive that the work of an ethnographer is highly subjective, and that there is a potentiality for bias. The ethnographers themselves have tried to protect against bias by utilizing a number of informants, selecting them to give varying points of view, and checking information and sources of information against each other. For example, the case study students reviewed and approved the case studies about themselves before the ethnographies were released. We have submitted drafts of the ethnographies to the developing agencies themselves for criticism and content verification, and have responded to their criticisms when content could not be verified through the field notes of the ethnographer.

In addition, we submitted early drafts to a panel of distinguished educational anthropologists for critiques, and corrected the drafts when conclusions rendered in the reports were not supported by sufficient documentation. The panel included Dr. Robert B. Textor, Professor of Education and Anthropology, Stanford University; Dr. Judith G. Goode, Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology, Temple University; and Dr. Harry F. Wolcott, Professor of Education and Anthropology, Center for Educational Policy and Management, University of Oregon. Dr. Textor also assisted us in the early planning for the use of ethnographic material in the total third-party investigation. We are grateful to these panel members for their technical assistance, and to the panel and the anthropologists who studied the four EBCE systems for helping us develop new insights into the evaluation of educational programs.

Reginald Corder
Project Director

January 1976

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CHAPTER 1

METHODOLOGY

A school, like any structured institution, creates a social environment to which its members must adapt. Students, staff, and even outside observers quickly learn that continued successful participation in the operations of the school requires of them a kind of social learning: the acquisition of values, attitudes, and modes of interpersonal behavior current within that social setting. This insight would be of greater concern to social scientists than to educators were not the social structure of the school inseparable from its function of education.

If the educational process is defined as the flow of information within the school setting, then any study of the total process must consider the entire universe of information that is being communicated. It can not be limited to the particular sub-set that deals with course content, subject matter, and "basic skills". The information that is transmitted to students also deals with patterned modes of social interaction within the school environment. When these are internalized they will place constraints upon the flow of information and thereby shape what the students will learn. The starting point of an anthropological study of an educational system is to determine the nature of these constraints, and the effects they have upon the learning process. One of the goals of such a study is to assess the ways in which the social structure of the school facilitates its educational goals, as well as the ways in which it acts to subvert them.

One aspect of the school's social structure is easily observable by anyone familiar with its formal organization. The traditional school population is divided into categories such as students, teachers, learning specialists, secretaries, administrative staff, and so on. These formal roles, together with the school's basic procedures and scheduled activities, comprise its theoretical structure--its ideal design. In practice, however, there are always modifications to this original design that must be introduced. Individual responsibilities are shared, exchanged, radically altered or completely eliminated. Basic procedures may be changed to suit operating conditions; intended activities may change in their scheduling, membership and function. The school's actual mode of operation contains an overt structure that may be observed and elicited from participating individuals and, subsequently, compared with the theoretical structure.

There is, in addition, a covert structure within the school. This consists of an informal set of rules concerning interpersonal behavior which conditions interaction, and thus constrains the flow of information. Social relationships which bear directly upon the educational process may not even occur within the ecological setting of the school building. This is particularly true of the Experience-Based Career Education program, where the focus of the educational process involves contact primarily outside the school environment.

This report assumes a prior familiarity by the reader with the theoretical structure of Experience-Based Career Education (EBCE), which may be found within many program documents. The intent of our observations and the purpose of our report has been to systematically describe the overt and covert structures of the EBCE program, and to compare its actual operations with its theoretical design. Because we have directed this report primarily towards program replicators, we have also focussed on the problems which are not merely idiosyncratic but are structural in nature, and likely to arise again.

Research Methodology

Generally, an anthropological study of social structure, whether in a traditional village, a modern urban area or an educational complex, involves an extended period of in-depth continuous participant observation. Only in this way is it possible to construct the individual social networks upon which an analysis of the entire structure can be based. It is unfortunate that time restrictions prohibited the full application of this research procedure in our study. Because the observers worked as a team to study two different EBCE programs (those being developed by the Appalachia Educational Laboratory and the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development), it was possible to observe each site only at intervals during the course of a single academic year. Nor was the full year observed, since the anthropological study began in November, some time after the commencement of Fall semester. However, even with these limitations, it was possible for us to observe eight full weeks at each site.

Our initial research effort began with the construction of a model of the social structure at each site, which took the form of an interaction matrix (Figure 1).

SAMPLE INTERACTION MATRIX

	Guidance Counselor	Placement Coordinator	Chauffeur	Secretary	Learning Coordinator	Resource Person	Student
Director of Operations							
Guidance Counselor							
Placement Coordinator							
Chauffeur							
Secretary							
Learning Coordinator							
Resource Person							
Student							

Figure 1.

Every "significant" category of personnel within the formal organizational hierarchy was arrayed against all other categories (and against itself if the category in question contained more than one individual). Not all personnel categories were considered "significant" in the context of this study--only those whose interactions with individuals in other categories had a direct bearing upon the educational process as it affected students. The major personnel categories which were excluded by this criterion (evaluators, developmental staff, and most levels of administration) will not always be present in replication sites. Our primary focus was those interactions which involved and included students, but we also considered interactions which represented nodal points in the flow of information that eventually reached students.

In this initial phase of our research we spent more time with staff than with students, realizing that a prolonged period of contact with the latter would be required before sufficient rapport was developed to obtain from them information of real value. The use of the interaction matrix as an initial research format quickly introduced us to the staff and to the major organizational stresses they faced. We were also, in this manner, made aware of the other categories of personnel whose interactions with students were significant, such as the chauffeur in one of the programs we studied, and the recorder at the other. Since our prior orientation to the EBCE program had been minimal, this procedure gave us a valuable over-view of the overt structure, and suggested the directions our later work would take.

Once we arrived at some understanding of the school's structure and operations, we spent a considerable amount of time simply getting to know the students. We hung around in student areas, attended group meetings and other structured activities, went out with students into the community, and treated them to long business lunches. Gaining their trust was not a simple matter. Because their program was experimental, EBCE students had been extensively observed, evaluated, and interrogated by many outsiders. They had become extremely wary, and their responses to the well-intended questions of outsiders had become highly patterned. To break through their reserve required an extended period of personal interaction.

The anthropological solution to the problem of observer effect upon social interaction is participant observation. The EBCE projects presented us, as social scientists, with a unique opportunity to work out internal roles within the structure. As professionals engaged in our work we met fully the requirements to be Resource Persons (i.e., laboratory-approved volunteer teachers of a particular career area). By entering into the structure, we became more aware of its operations and its problems. We were especially interested in the function of the Resource Person (RP), which was the role that we adopted. In this way we experienced personally the Resource Persons' difficulty in maintaining adequate communications with the Operations Staff, and some of the problems they face in working with the students. As Resource Persons, we were also able to reciprocate for the information that students provided us, and thus minimize their feeling that we, like so many other evaluators, were "ripping them off" for time and information by not giving anything in return.

We also undertook at each site, to set up some form of Workshop or Seminar. At Far West EBCE, the Workshop is a standard format, and one could be easily arranged. The selection by students to enroll in the Workshop involved only the regular process employed by them in choosing a Workshop or RP; i.e., self-selection with the advice of a Far West staff member. Student interest in the Anthropology Workshop was quite high, and attendance ranged from 10 to 30 over a period of three weeks. Some students used it as part of their credit in Career Education; others elected to work on social science projects for which we, as Anthropologists, served as RP's, continuing this relationship after the Workshop ended.

At Appalachia Educational Laboratory another format had to be employed. Students there generally spend only one day per week at the Learning Center, and the rest of their time at "placements". Therefore, seven students elected to be placed with us, for periods of time ranging from one to three weeks. Those students received credit for a Career Orientation in Anthropology. In addition, each student completed one or more Activity Sheets (academic assignments), which earned them credit in Social Science and English/Communications.

In these structured interactions with students at both sites, we gave them a basic introduction to the discipline of anthropology and the work of an anthropologist, both as teacher and researcher. From our participation we learned a great deal about the documentation of student work. We served as evaluators for student projects and placements, observing the actual work they did and its translation into credit. This gave us some insight into the problems faced by many Learning Coordinators.*

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*See page 19 for a description of this staff role in the AEL/EBCE.

We learned more particularly about some students: their attitudes towards education and the EBCE program; their abilities to deal with conceptual and theoretical material; their aspirations and plans. The students with whom we worked most closely became invaluable sources for information of many kinds. We made numerous "site visits", going with these students to meet their RP's, and to observe their actual work in the community. From the groups of students we knew best we chose (with their consent) a number to be the subjects of intensive case studies and more structured interviews.

As we moved toward increasing intimacy with a group of students at each site, we were also accumulating information about a major segment of the school's covert structure--the small, informally organized and consistent peer associations. Space-time surveys taken over extended periods of observation revealed that most student interactions at the school occurred within the contexts of these groups; to some degree they also structured student interaction in the community. Further questioning elicited information about the nature of group formation. In this way we began to appreciate the effects of small group processes and interactions on the intended and scheduled program activities.

As we began each successive interval of work at the sites, the questions which directed our observations became more relevant and refined. By working as a team, we accumulated two sets of information about the program. Combining these sets in our ongoing discussions resulted in a deepening of analytic insight.

In the final phase of our research we returned once again to the interview format. In working on case studies of students we asked open-ended questions about their reasons for leaving regular schools, their reactions to various programmed activities, their work throughout the year, their future plans, and their conclusions about the effect of the program upon their personal growth. Since we were already familiar with these students and their work, we were able to pursue specific questions of interest at considerable length with some assurance of honest responses. Students were told how this information would be used, and that whatever portions were given in confidence would aid our analysis but would remain unattributed.

We also conducted final interviews with the staff. The Learning Coordinators of those students on whom case studies were done were requested to comment upon their work and attitude toward the program. We also asked the LC's what information and conclusions they would like to contribute to our report; this open-ended question produced some of the most interesting and valuable information we were able to collect.

CHAPTER 2

THE SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT

Appalachian Culture History

Between 1790 and 1840, the indigenous Indian tribes inhabiting the rugged, densely wooded hills and valleys of the Appalachian region disappeared. Those who were not brutally exterminated were systematically removed from their lands by military fiat, in violation of pre-existing treaties, and forced to migrate to the new Indian Territories in what is now Oklahoma. As the Indian population of Appalachia declined, white settlers moved into the vacuum left by their departure. Descendants of the original English and Scotch-Irish colonists to come to American shores left the swelling towns and villages of the coastal states for the narrow valleys and stream hollows of Appalachia, clustering in small communities wherever the land was not too steep to farm.

For over a century, the mountaineers were left to themselves. The great wave of intensive industrialization that passed over the Eastern Seabord in the early 19th century had little initial impact upon them. The population of Appalachia was scattered; its rough, broken terrain prevented easy transport and communications; the Midwest and beyond offered greater prospects for profit. Isolated and economically self-sufficient, the mountain people retained many of the traditions that accelerating urbanization eradicated elsewhere. Patterns of speech, manners and other customs survived as remnants of an earlier heritage, but at the same time a distinctive mountain culture emerged. Herbal medicine took the place of city doctoring, and local arts and crafts substituted for the manufactured goods that were so hard to obtain. Unique styles in music and Christian Fundamentalism also developed within the close-knit, kin-based communities of the Appalachian mountains.

The isolation that made possible this local cultural efflorescence came to an end in the first years of the 20th Century, when Appalachia was rediscovered by its industrial neighbors. The region is rich in natural resources, particularly the coal upon which industry depends. Mineral buyers, representing business interests in the North, came to Appalachia to acquire control of these resources, employing a document known as a "Broadform Deed" to purchase the mineral rights to vast stretches of mountain territory for an average of 50 cents an acre.

The farmers who so cheaply bartered away these rights retained only surface rights to their land. They had envisioned nothing more damaging than mine shafts when they sold the privilege to extract sub-surface minerals "by any means convenient and necessary", and freed the buyers from any liability for damage caused to the surface of the land by the process of extraction. The ravages of strip-mining were then unknown.

Once the resources of the region were purchased and came under external control, Appalachia became, in effect, an "internal colony" of its more industrial neighbors. Like so many other underdeveloped peoples of the world dominated by foreign powers, the mountaineer was subjected to ruthless exploitation, and was betrayed countless times.

> "To begin with he was betrayed by his ancestors who foolishly sold a gigantic wealth of timber and minerals for only a few pennies to the acre, thus effectively disinheriting whole generations. He was betrayed by the timber barons who exploited the forests with remorseless cupidity, and by the coal corporations which emptied and scarred his hillsides, contaminated his streams with mine acids, polluted his air with sulfurous fumes from burning culm heaps, maimed thousands of workmen and spread multitudes of widows and orphans across the valleys. He was betrayed by his politicians who conspired with the great, absentee-owned extractive industries to permit them to withdraw the riches of the mountains without being taxed to provide the schools, libraries, hospitals and other services for which the mountaineers hungered. He was betrayed by the mission schools and colleges which came to educate his children and taught them to leave the region rather than to stand and fight for its development."
>
> Harry Caudill (Forward to John Fetterman's Stinking Creek.)

Charleston, West Virginia

The problems which afflict the Appalachian region as a whole all converge on Charleston, the capital of West Virginia. What first comes to the attention of even the casual visitor is the unusually high concentration of pollutants. Charleston is ranked as one of the ten worst-polluted cities in the United States, and is a unique member of this group in that its population is only 75,000, while the other nine all have more than one million inhabitants. Pollution in the Charleston area is not primarily automotive in origin (a function of population), but is from industrial sources. The Kanawha Valley, in which Charleston is located, has long been a major center for the extraction and processing of coal, oil, gas, limestone, lumber and other resources. Three miles to the west of the State Capitol Building is the city of South Charleston, which proudly proclaims itself "The Chemical Capital of the World." Literally thousands of acres are devoted to chemical processing plants, which produce a variety of industrial substances. There is a strong resistance to the enactment or enforcement of legislation that would control these high-pollution industries; they represent the mainstay of the local economy, and any curtailment of their activities would reduce the number of available sources of employment.

In addition to its industrial function, Charleston is a major governmental center, acting as the administrative seat for three levels of government: State, County and Municipal. It is also the major retail and service center for an extremely large community, with a higher level of economic activity than any other city in West Virginia. The great range of employment possibilities in Charleston has attracted a fairly large migrant population, both from other counties within West Virginia, and from out of state, resulting in a diverse population of extreme contrasts.

> "In spite of the fact that part of the Charleston Area is a major industrial complex and that local family incomes are among the nation's highest, cultural deprivation, provincialism, and poverty are widespread throughout the area. Particularly this is true for most of the rural and much of the urban population that is currently made up of rural migrants."
>
> AEL Document: Description of the Greater Charleston Area and its People.

The upper extreme of the socio-economic spectrum is occupied by two distinct groups. The first of these consists largely of native-born Charlestonians, whose families have been in the area for many generations. Their wealth derives from the region's natural resources, or from early business investments. The second "elite" group is composed primarily of "industrial imports", those persons filling the high-paying managerial, administrative, professional, and technical positions within local industries. As suggested by the term "imports", these upper-level positions are usually filled by "outsiders". Though there is some social distance between these two groups, they are generally referred to jointly as the "Hill folk", or "hillers", reflecting their residence in the middle class and upper-middle class neighborhoods on the suburban hilltops surrounding Charleston.

In contrast to the "hill folk" are those who reside in the unincorporated rural communities along the stream hollows: the "holler folk", who fall in the opposite, lower extreme of the socioeconomic spectrum. Many of the "holler" families, too, are migrants, having come to Kanawha county from Virginia and other areas in unsuccessful attempts to homestead farms. The "holler" communities are heir to many of the traditions and values of the Appalachian mountaineer, so different from the predominantly middle-class orientation of those who presently reside on the hills around Charleston. The economic opportunities available to the "holler" folk are extremely limited in their home communities, and only slightly less so within Charleston itself. Though there is a constant stream of migrants into the area from out of state, to accept employment in the chemical and other industries, so many once-rural West Virginians leave for other places that there is a small, but measurable decrease in population each year.

The Educational Climate

> "Even the most disadvantaged slum child is aware of dozens of jobs, for people going about their jobs crowd past his world. The city child has some preparation for jobs, where the hollow child has few people to serve as realistic patterns. The career aspirations of Kanawha County rural youth are extremely limited.... Many children living in rural Kanawha Country have never been to Charleston, the State Capital."
>
> AEL Document: Description of the Greater Charleston Area and its people.

The educators of Kanawha County, and particularly of Charleston, must deal with the widely different value systems, attitudes and beliefs which exist within the county. The educational system they have devised is designed to reduce this diversity. Central to their educational philosophy is the belief that the school must take upon itself the responsibility of planning and shaping the lives of the students who attend it. The curriculum that results aims at the uniform inculcation of middle-class values, regardless of the class background of the student population.

This perspective upon the function of the school has increasingly been a source of alarm for the tradition-oriented people of Kanawha County, who feel that they have no input on educational policy. Their view is that schools should provide "learning" of the Three-R's variety to students, not any sort of inculcation of cultural values different from those of their parents. Literacy and arithmetical competence are valuable survival skills in modern-day Appalachia; sophisticated "urban" values and goals are not. Such values and goals cause youngsters to migrate to cites and even to leave the region entirely, in search of the freedom and affluence non-traditional education has taught them to esteem.

The recent textbook controversy in Kanawha County is symptomatic of this clash in class-related cultural values. The rural population, reacting defensively to a perceived breakdown in traditional community structures and Fundamentalist religious beliefs, focussed upon the high school curriculum as one of the many avenues of those "urban" values that seemed to be alienating their children from them. The intensity of feeling attached to the specific issues involved in the controversy should not lead the observer away from a consideration of the underlying class conflicts that engendered them.

For much of 1974-75, education was a major issue in Kanawha County, and it was inevitable that there should have been some impact upon the Experience-Based Career Education program being developed there. The textbook controversy may account for some part of any opposition to the EBCE program voiced by the parents of prospective students. It should also be noted, however, that Charleston parents are, in general, suspicious of educational innovation. The only experimental systems to have received any attention dealt primarily with structures and programs contained within the traditional schools; the notion of "alternative" formats and modes of education was relatively unknown.

In general, Charleston parents tend to hold the neutralist view that schools should provide "preparation for life". This regional perspective probably influenced, to a greater or lesser extent, the AEL program emphasis on the practical, pragmatic side of the Career Education concept. The designers focussed the student's program on the *placement*, which they determined to be a prolonged one-to-one relationship between the student and an adult *resource person*, in the context of an *employer site* out in the community. At the employer site, the student would have *hands-on experience* in doing the work that for the resource person is a source of income. Several such site experiences over the year, blended with an academic course of study tailored to the student's site activities, would, in theory, provide the student with the formal training and practical experience necessary for mature, informed decisions regarding career choice. The placement, then, is intended to be the heart of the Charleston EBCE program.

CHAPTER 3

THE LEARNING CENTER - PLACE AND PEOPLE

McGwigan School

The Learning Center of the Charleston EBCE program is a converted red-brick schoolhouse, built originally in the early 1920's. It is located almost directly across the Kanawha River from the State Capitol Building. Of the three floors of McGwigan School, only one is extensively inhabited by the students; the other two are occupied by administrative, development, and evaluation staff. (A detailed analysis of the spatial layout of the school will be found in the following chapter.) The neighborhood surrounding McGwigan school is primarily middle-class residential, and the only major institutions nearby are Charleston Memorial Hospital (where a number of AEL students usually have site placements), Morris Harvey College (referred to by the students as "Harvey High"), and offices of two major utilities. The downtown area is about 2 and 1/2 miles away, but is not easily accessible since public transportation facilities are so poor, a condition general for Kanawha County.

A consequence of this "peripheral" location is that the Learning Center is isolated spatially from the experience sites, where students spent most of their time. The spaces and building lots surrounding the Learning Center bear little relationship to the content or purpose of the EBCE program. The school and its environs do not participate in the busy rhythm of a downtown area, and many students report that weeks, or even months may go by without a trip to the city center. The position of the Learning Center thus replicates the traditional school's isolation of students from the community context. The separation of experience site and Learning Center tends to reinforce the distinction between academic activities and career experiences.

Given the peripheral location of the Learning Center, and the inadequacy of public transportation, AEL was forced to rely upon a specially-devised transportation system consisting of two station wagons and chauffeurs, thereby expanding the range of adult contacts students have through the school. In addition, the Learning Coordinators may be called upon to pick students up at their homes, and drop them off at their experience site on the way to work. Though this may be an inconvenience for some, it has the decided advantage of personalizing the relationship between the Learning Coordinator* and the student, which is clearly one of the best features of the program.

Student Population

In recruiting students for the EBCE program, the intention of the AEL staff was to replicate the population of the outside community. The actual selection parameters were as follows:

1) Grade Level: The Charleston AEL program is essentially a "Senior Year" program; 80% of the students are graduating Seniors and 20% are non-graduating Juniors.

2) Sex Balance: Approximately half and half.

3) Racial Balance: The only significant minority grouping in Charleston is the Black Community, which constitutes about 7% of the total population. Blacks have roughly this representation among AEL students.

4) Class Mixture: The Charleston population varies considerably with regard to socio-economic class, ranging from upper-middle class "elites" to middle and lower working classes and indigents. The Kanawha County population includes the rural category of "Holler" folk, which is under-represented in the AEL program due to their remote habitats, and inadequate transportation facilities.

5) Home High Schools: Ten high schools feed into the EBCE program, with fairly uniform distribution. This circumstance accomplishes the goal of class distribution in the program, since most neighborhoods in Charleston are de facto class segregated, and most high schools draw from homogeneous populations.

6) Academic Distribution: At least some portion of the student population of AEL was drawn randomly from the total pool of applicants. This was intended to result in a range of student academic levels, from "near drop-out"

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*See page 19 for a description of this position.

to "straight-A". Both of these extremes are represented, and, as might be anticipated, the majority of students are of "average" academic achievement.

Given these parameters, the AEL staff staged a publicity campaign to inform high school students in the Charleston area of the EBCE program, and to elicit applications from them. From this pool of applicants, a random selection was made, producing the majority of the student body. A few students were specially recruited, and certain individuals were admitted upon their special request, though the normal selection process had passed them over.

With some notable exceptions, those students who had accepted the programs provided by their home high schools tended not to apply for the AEL program. Students satisfied with the academic program of their home high schools, or those deeply involved in extra-curricular activities would naturally be hesitant to leave for another school environment. Also, those students committed to a tightly-knit peer group in the home high schools might be unwilling to remove themselves from the scene. Marilyn, a very conscientious student, told us "I was interested in EBCE, but I worried about applying. All my friends are at _______ High School, and I thought I might lose touch with them. It didn't make any difference, though. I see them after school, anyway."

Though it is quite possible to maintain contacts with peer groups in the home high schools, many students are unaware of this at the time of application to EBCE. Those students who did apply tended to have quite clear-cut motivations for so doing. A not-inconsiderable number were interested in specific jobs, and were attracted to the EBCE program by the promise of on-site, hands-on experience in the field of their choice. Ajax, for example, was "interested in finding out about the business world. I wanted the experience of doing it." Roberta said, "My mother is a nurse, and I've always thought of being one, too. When EBCE started, the first thing I wanted to investigate was nursing." Marilyn also wanted to be a nurse, "... ever since first grade. My mother is a nurse, but she never pushed me. I just knew it was a good thing to do. I've worked in a hospital before, and I thought that EBCE could give me an opportunity to learn about careers in the medical field other than nursing." Many students had specific preferences such as these before entering EBCE, and their preferences figures in their decisions to apply.

A second category of students who applied to EBCE were those who were turned off to their high schools, or to education in general. Many of these had hopes of finding meaningful educational experiences in the EBCE program because it was a real alternative to the traditional system. They objected to the boredom, the routine, the totalitarian atmosphere of their high school, and expected that when the conditions of education changed, the experience as a whole would be more relevant. Jack said, "I didn't like Stonewall High. It was monotonous; every day the same thing. I knew AEL would be different because my brother went here two years ago. He's got a job now--learned all about his career from the program." Other AEL students had little thought of careers; they simply wanted to escape an unpleasant learning or social situation. "I didn't like the way my high school was run," Georgia told us. "Teachers would use their authority to feel superior to their students, all except for their favorites, and I was not a favorite." Many students, though, saw the EBCE program as a way of getting out of school altogether. They needed one more year of school time to graduate, and thought that EBCE would let them "get by without doing anything". Ed, a particularly energetic student, said, "My first idea about EBCE was that once you were away from the school, out on the site, there was no more work."

The students' motivations in applying for the EBCE program were quite varied -- some wishing to explore particular careers, others wishing to escape from their home high schools. The program's reputation in the community, unfortunately, focusses on the latter set of motives. Marilyn reported, "My parents thought that AEL was for drop-outs", and David told us that, "Most people think that this is a school for students with problems of some kind." The EBCE students became quite sensitive to these external assessments. One of the reasons for their undertaking a major charity project during the year was to alter their image in the eyes of the community.

The Learning Coordinators

The individual directly responsible for providing the student with an integrated, balanced program that both satisfies student needs and matches graduation requirements is the Learning Coordinator, hereinafter referred to as the LC. The 78 students at AEL are divided among six LC's--one male, five female--for an average student load of 13 per LC. It should be noted that one of the "selling features" of the AEL program has been a maximum operational working load of 18-20 students per LC. In order to demonstrate the system's potential for operating at this level, one of the LC's was "freed-up" for the last nine-week period of the year, and her students distributed between two other LC's, to bring their student loads up to the specified level. The LC's report, however, that this does not represent a valid demonstration of the system's capacity. Most of the managerial responsibility of the LC, they say, was concluded prior to that final nine-week period, and the work load at that time is not typical of the load year-round. They estimate that, given the present organization and duties (Spring 1975), the maximum load is about 15 students per LC, but this depends upon the credit requirements of the particular students involved. The actual LC work load is a function not of the total number of students assigned to them, but rather the number of students times their average credit requirements.

Five of the LC's are native West Virginians; one is from India. Five are in their mid-20's; one in the mid-30's. One is male; five are female. One is Black, one Indian, and four are Caucasians. Most are recent college graduates with Education certificates. For several of the LC's, this job is their first in the field of education. Those working on further degrees have chosen to specialize in Counseling. The LC population contrasts with the staffs in the Operations, Diffusion, and Evaluation units, which are largely composed of slightly older individuals, with higher degrees, who have been brought in from out of state for this job.

The responsibilities of the LC as student program manager will be detailed in the following chapter.

The Secretaries

It is a truism of organizational theory that any complex institution is run by its secretaries; they are the repositories and the managers of the resources and the information most crucial to that institution's continued functioning. The EBCE program is no exception to this rule. One Secretary, whose job is nominally typing for three staff members (Guidance Counselor, Placement Coordinator, and Operations Director) located in the Basement, is involved in many other functions: she supervises the typing courses, and on occasion takes over counseling sessions. A second Secretary, who is located on the main floor, is in charge of the procedures most intimately related to the day-by-day operation of the program. When students or staff enter and leave McGwigan School, they must sign in and sign out on a sheet located on this Secretary's desk. She is in charge of attendance records, and is, therefore well-versed on those student problems reflected in their attendance (or absence). She also keeps records of the students' transportation requests. When public transportation is possible, she dispenses funds for that purpose directly to the students (this is a source of income for some students, who hitchhike back and forth, and then keep their transportation funds). If no public facilities are available, the same Secretary, with the chauffeurs, will work the students' needs into the school's own transportation schedule. The Secretary is also in charge of all the school materials: stationery, equipment, petty cash, and so on. Staff members and students alike say of this person, "I speak to her more than I do anyone else. She does everything."

The desk of this secretary is strategically located to enable her to supervise the day-to-day operation of the program. Consequently, it becomes a major social nexus, where staff and students congregate informally. A wealth of information flows within such a nexus, and this Secretary is privy to it all. Better than any other single individual, she is cognizant of the activities of everyone at McGwigan School--students and staff. Her advice is frequently sought, both on a personal basis, and formally, at staff meetings, where her vital role as an information center is recognized. This person, while not given the title, operates much as would a Head or Senior Secretary in some organizations.

Chauffeurs

In response to the peripheral location of McGwigan School and the inadequacy of public transportation facilities in Kanawha County, AEL provides its students with two station wagons and two chauffeurs to facilitate their passage from the Learning Center to experience sites, and back again. Transportation to or from student homes was sometimes provided by AEL. As a consequence, many students spent as much as one hour per day in close contact with the chauffeurs--as much time as they were supposed to spend in conference with their LC's per week!

It is important to point out that one of the chauffeurs--an ex-truck driver--has made himself an indispensable element of many aspects of the program's operations. He receives no increase in pay for these extraordinary services to students. He describes himself as so busy that, "They think I got twins." He has long been in charge of the entire transportation system at EBCE, due, in part, to his familiarity with the location of many EBCE experience sites. While his primary official concern is with the transportation system, his emotional concern is with the students on a personal level. He has helped them with their student newspaper; he has coordinated their basketball games and tournaments, and he has been a Resource Person for several of them concerning the subject of Labor Unions. His interest in young people and the time he spends with them does not go unnoticed, and many students speak to him in confidence about their problems, and treat him as they would a friend. Frequently, the LC's will ask the chauffeur's advice on how to deal with specific student problems, since it is recognized that he is one of the staff members closest to the students, and most in their confidence.

This aspect of the chauffeur's job is certainly not a part of the program design. Nor is it an inevitable consequence of the time students spend with the chauffeurs; the other driver simply makes his rounds and does his job well without intensive personal involvement. It is clear, though, that if the educational structure is sufficiently flexible, well-intentioned and highly motivated people can reshape their jobs to suit their own temperaments. They can transform the jobs utterly, and use them as vehicles for expressing their personal commitment to and concern for others. Or, they may work to the structural requirements of their positions, and limit the depth of their personal involvement with the individuals in the program.

Guidance Counselor

The Guidance Counselor has two major jobs: first, to act as liaison with the ten home high schools, keeping up with student progress and making sure that graduation occurs on time. The second job is working with students on their futures, their attitudes and their problems.

His closest contact with students comes when they have exceptional personal problems that need to be resolved. This function is intended to be shared with the LC's, the feeling being that the teacher generally has a better vantage point on the student than the guidance counselor.

In addition to individual conferences with students, the counselor holds two sessions per day for those students who are present at McGwigan. (This was reduced to one session per day during the second semester.) Frequently, these sessions involve the administration of various tests relating to vocational preference, personality and attitude. The sessions are intended to help students synthesize information from sites with test scores and other feedback, in order to increase their level of self-awareness. The counselor tries to encourage informal rap sessions and peer counseling, and individual problems always take precedence over any activity he has planned for the group. Attendance at these sessions has been poor. The counselor attributes this to the students' boredom when they are in-house.

The counselor's rapport with students and staff is excellent, due almost entirely to his personal characteristics. It is significant that the counselor and the chauffeur are close personal friends, and spent a great deal of time discussing students and student problems (at a level of discussion which did not violate the confidentiality of the counselor-student relationship).

Placement Coordinator

In the school year of 1974-75, AEL created a special position which delegated to a single individual the responsibility for managing all information having to do with employer sites. Previously, this task was divided among the LC's and the development staff. The position consists of three main functions:

1) *Site Development*. It is to the best interests of the program to have a constantly expanding pool of employer sites. Key individuals at potential sites will be contacted, the program will be explained to them, and attempts will be made to recruit them for the program. This phase of the job was largely completed previous to 1974-75 by a member of the development staff called a *Resource Analyst*, though site development is a continual process. Generally, new sites are developed upon specific student requests, and they are then added to the employer pool.

2) Learning Guide Development. Many employer sites, particularly the large institutions, or those with special restrictions and working conditions, have descriptive guides prepared by the Placement Coordinator (or the Resource Analyst) called Learning Guides. These give general information about the site, and indicate the range of potential activities there, along with suggesting related projects. Approximately 90% of the sites in the pool have learning guides completed for them. Those guides that have been written must be continually up-dated as site conditions change. This phase of the job, too, was largely the responsibility of the Resource Analyst, in the early phases of the program, though some duties carry over onto the Placement Coordinator.

3) Placement Coordination. Student requests for specific sites are channeled from the LC to the Placement Coordinator, who will schedule the student for a placement. The differential popularity of sites, and the limited number of placements at many sites, combine to produce waiting lists for some sites, over which the Placement Coordinator has charge. This function requires extensive information flow among Placement Coordinator, LC and student, and occupies the bulk of the Placement Coordinator's time.

The Placement Coordinator also participates in the frequent staff meetings, in order to keep LC's and others current on the statuses of specific sites, and to inform them of new sites recently developed. This staff member will also convey complaints from Resource People, both about specific students, or about the program in general.

Operations Director

Overseeing the general operations of the EBCE program is a Director, upon whose shoulders much of the institutional burden rests. He is in many cases the final decision-maker on matters of policy, design, operation, and personnel, both routine and exceptional in nature. Whenever there is a major problem with students, sites, or general procedures, the Operations Director is called in.

His functions, in addition, include a sizable public relations task. He must deal with Charleston Public School officials, with people from NIE, with evaluators from Educational Testing Service, and with potential replicators who are interested in the possibility of purchasing the program for their own school districts.

The main task of the Operations Director, in structural terms, is to act as a link between Development and Operations; he must assume the responsiblity for implementing the educational model devised by Development, and alter it to suit operational conditions. The present Operations Director was for two years a member of the development staff, and was responsible for the creation of many of the basic procedures of the program. His relationship to the program, then, is unique, and an artifact of the experimental nature of AEL.

The work space of the Operations Director is on the basement floor, and he is thus removed from the normal movements of the students. His dealings with students are largely problem-oriented. His dealings with LC's on the other hand, are more regular, and are maintenance-oriented. Their opinion of him is highly favorable, and he is frequently consulted by them.

Resource Person

A final category of actor within the EBCE program is the Resource Person (RP), the individual with whom the student works most closely for the weeks or months on-site. The RP is, in many ways, the key figure in the career education concept and is central to the entire educational system that has been devised around it. Of the total cast of characters in the EBCE program, there are more RP's than any other single category of individual, even more than there are students--though not all RP's are constantly activated. The relationship between the student and the RP is critical to the success of the program, and a detailed analysis of it will be found in later portions of this report.

CHAPTER 4

THE IN-HOUSE DAY

Every student in the AEL-EBCE program spends at least one fixed day per week in-house at the Learning Center. A student could decide to schedule two days per week to insure adequate preparation for college, or Learning Coordinators might suggest this schedule to those students who had large credit loads to complete, or to those who had fallen behind in their work. Almost all students will have at least one period between site placements when they remain in-house for a week or more.

Thus, on any given day, one-fifth of the student population should be present at the Learning Center in addition to those with program variations described above. Each daily population became a fairly permanent sub-group; the entire student body never assembled during the period of observation.

Part of each student's day at the Learning Center was taken up with activities scheduled by the program. Every student had an appointment with his Learning Coordinator (LC) and was required to attend one Counseling Session. One group of students also participated in a secretarial procedures class organized by an LC. Seminars covering major academic fields on a rotating basis were also held in the afternoons, attracting a varying number of students.

The LC-Student Conference: the Academic Program

The Learning Coordinator-student conference was the most important of the structured events. The LC has a focal role in the EBCE program, as the title suggests. It is impossible to describe a "typical" conference since each student had an individual program and attitude and each LC a different style. However, there were certain program essentials which were consistently a part of the conference: the student's academic work and the mechanics of placement.

The LC's are responsible for monitoring the progress of each student's academic program, which involved them in many different activities. Management of the student's program meant, in most cases, that the LC originated, wrote, and evaluated all activity sheets for all courses.

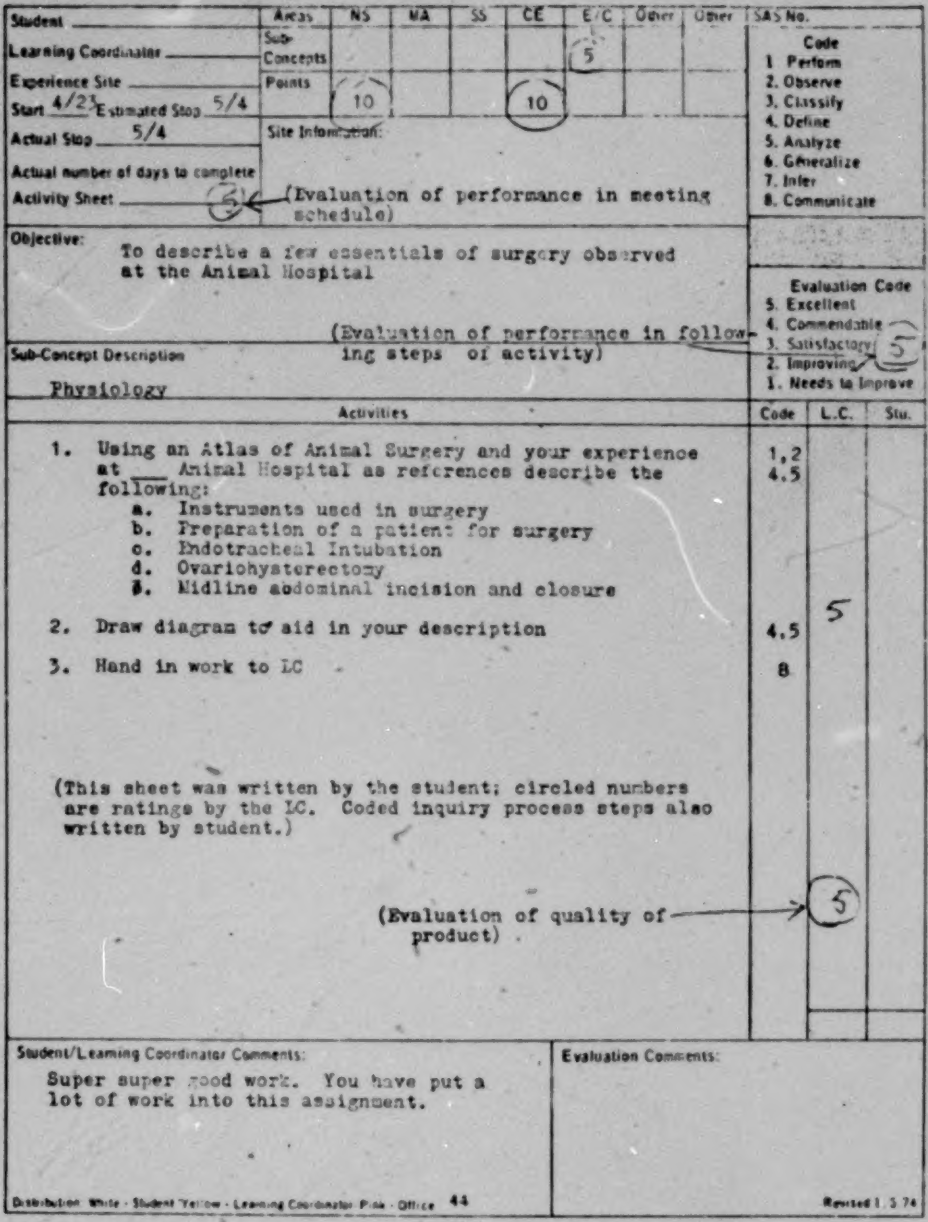
Activity sheets are the forms used to organize and document the student's work; a sample is shown as Figure 2. Although each student varied in the number of credits he planned to complete, four credits was an average load. Thus each conference involved the preparation of at least two or three activity sheets. For those students with greater credit needs, the load was correspondingly higher.

Student and LC worked together in making up new activity sheets, but the student's part varied greatly. Some began to write many of their own assignments as the year progressed, but many relied upon the LC for all work. Often the LC provided the basic idea for the activity, and students suggested the form of the product or amended the content in some way.

The content of activity sheets varied widely. Many were based on textbooks and included reading through chapters and doing questions or exercises. Students also wrote essays on current topics (such as the textbook dispute which occurred in Charleston during the year), or read and reported on books which interested them. Other activities included carrying out experiments using placement resources, making photo displays of equipment or processes relevant to a particular job, discussing some personal problem or decision, looking into educational opportunities and costs, planning out a life insurance policy, and replacing parts in a car engine. LC's learned, over the school year, about the students' aptitudes and interests, and tried to suggest work which they could and would accomplish.

The activity sheet is also planned to refer to the inquiry process in order to help students learn about learning. Each activity was broken into steps which the LC coded in terms of its appropriate point in the process of an inquiry. We observed that in ordinary practice, these were "empty" categories; that is, the LC simply wrote a number beside a step in the activity, and the student paid it no attention at all. We never heard any discussion of the inquiry process, either generally or related to a particular activity.

During the conference, the student also turned in activity sheets and products done during the previous week. If the product were an oral report or a visual display--both of which were popular formats with the students--the LC listened during the presentation, discussed it with the student, and gave an immediate evaluation. Written work was usually returned the following week with corrections and a written evaluation.



	Areas	NS	MA	SS	CE	E/C	Other	Other	SAS No.
Student	Sub-Concepts					5			
Learning Coordinator	Points	10			10				
Experience Site									

Start 4/23 Estimated Stop 5/4

Actual Stop 5/4

Actual number of days to complete Activity Sheet 3 ← (Evaluation of performance in meeting schedule)

Site Information:

Code
1. Perform
2. Observe
3. Classify
4. Define
5. Analyze
6. Generalize
7. Infer
8. Communicate

Objective: To describe a few essentials of surgery observed at the Animal Hospital

(Evaluation of performance in following steps of activity) → 5

Evaluation Code
5. Excellent
4. Commendable
3. Satisfactory
2. Improving
1. Needs to Improve

Sub-Concept Description

Physiology

Activities	Code	L.C.	Stu.
1. Using an Atlas of Animal Surgery and your experience at ___ Animal Hospital as references describe the following: a. Instruments used in surgery b. Preparation of a patient for surgery c. Endotracheal Intubation d. Ovariohysterectomy e. Midline abdominal incision and closure	1,2 4.5		
2. Draw diagram to aid in your description	4.5	5	
3. Hand in work to LC	8		
(This sheet was written by the student; circled numbers are ratings by the LC. Coded inquiry process steps also written by student.)			
(Evaluation of quality of product) →		5	

Student/Learning Coordinator Comments:

Super super good work. You have put a lot of work into this assignment.

Evaluation Comments:

Distribution: White - Student Yellow - Learning Coordinator Pink - Office 44

Revised 1.3.74

Figure 2. Sample Activity Sheet.

The activity sheet includes a column for student evaluation of his own work, but this was seldom used. Students occasionally voiced disagreements with the LC's evaluation or with the number of points earned for the activity, but most often they did not comment. Several students complained to us that their LC's consistently undervalued their work, and they seemed to have no expectation that they could change the evaluation by their own assessments. A formative evaluation report prepared by AEL staff on "Credit and Grading Procedures" indicated that students perceived LC's as using quantitative rather than qualitative criteria, a reversal of the LC's own perceptions of their grading procedures.

The whole set of activity sheets which a student completes should reflect progress in exploring the set of concepts he initially selected during the orientation period. This initial structure did not seem to be consistently utilized as a reference for the construction of activity sheets, however. LC's might occasionally refer to it for new avenues of work for the student and the list of concepts was also employed (although infrequently) as an access to the file of standard activity sheets.

More frequently, the core of the concepts which the student explored was provided by one or two textbooks in the subject. This might coincide with the student's own goals in learning. For example, Marilyn wished to complete a course in physiology, and used texts as well as many supplementary sources. Georgia decided to review some simple mathematics, since she hadn't taken any courses in the field for a year. "I did it all the time. At the first of the year she [the LC] gave me a book, so I turned in two sections of a chapter per week. I finished almost two books." Another student interested in aviation read through a manual, turning in periodic reports. Several students who wanted to increase their vocabularies worked consistently at textbooks. Many of the activity sheets we examined which had been written by the students themselves were textbook assignments.

Most of the students who worked well with textbooks had performed well in the traditional school environment, however. Other students found such work uninteresting, and the source of their activity sheets tended to shift over time to their particular extra-curricular activities and interests, and to work which could be done at placement sites. In this way students continued to do at least some work within the academic structure of the program. However, there appeared to be little relation between their activities and their original conceptual goals.

Goals were also framed in terms of gaining a certain number of points on activity sheets by the end of the reporting period for translation to credit. Although LC's often verbally encouraged students to view conceptual goals as central and to continue working past the required point total, achievement of the point total was crucial to the award of credit. When the students had little real interest in their courses, the real goal of their work became attaining this point total, and learning goals had little relevance for them. Reaching the goal defined in this way seemed easy. Jack appraised the situation in this way: "Here we come from a classroom where we couldn't stand to work, you work just because you had to, because they make you. You come here and see that you don't have to do near as much work."

The AEL-EBCE staff recognized this problem; one of the program aims is to help the student learn about and develop his own interests as well as an internal discipline and responsibility to the steady accomplishment of his work. However, in practice, a major problem which every LC faced with some of the students is failure to remain on schedule in completing work. Students may agree to an activity and to the proposed closing date, but fail to complete it or ask for repeated extensions until the LC finally closes it without product. During the period of these extensions, the LC may defer new work, with the result that the student falls further behind schedule. Or, the LC may continue to work out additional activity sheets with the student; in some cases this means a mounting stack of unfinished work. Eventually the student may finish a number of these back assignments, or he may agree with the LC that they be closed without product. There is no penalty for activity sheets closed in this way, except that the student will tend to fall behind schedule in completing his course work. The major sanction used by the LC is a reprimand or warning; a student's reasonable excuses are generally accepted if they are not too often repeated.

Because the program does not have strict sanctions which compel students to work, their achievements are their own in a significant way, and they recognize this. Most would agree with Ajax: "You can really do a lot or a little and you can get by. This place makes a person motivate himself or sit back and let his brain get fat." And an LC comments, "For good or bad, students make an awful lot of decisions in this program. Some kids have handled some remarkable things by themselves--some well, some not so well."

However, the LC's feel that students cannot be allowed to suffer the consequences of acts which can greatly affect their future, such as failing to graduate. In some cases, the LC began to demand that the student produce a certain amount of work, setting deadlines or scheduling him for a week in-house to catch up. Both students and LC's came to resent this decrease in the student's responsibility for his program. One LC complained, "The students aren't responsible for anything. We write the sheets and then have to stand over them until they're finished."

Work done under these circumstances is not of high quality, which exacerbates the negative dynamic. When the LC finally refuses to grant further extensions, students typically complete the back log of activity sheets as Bob did while we observed in the seminar room one day. His LC had told him that work not complete by that afternoon would not be accepted. With three chapters in a physiology textbook to read, and questions to answer at the end of each, he first skimmed quickly through the pages. Other students were conversing around him and he was frequently distracted. He answered each question perfunctorily, usually turning through the chapter until he found a passage that seemed to suit and copying or paraphrasing the text. As Jack acknowledged, "You don't learn nothing by cramming. But it piles up and ya gotta get it done." Ajax added, "You have to learn the art of copying. You look at the level it's at, put in worse sentences, maybe add a little information." This was, however, probably the same procedure which these students used in their work in traditional schools.

This path through the academic structure of the program was not chosen by all students, of course, At least two or three students in the group assigned to each LC followed an approximation of the "ideal" process: they were motivated to complete their courses, if not to assimilate a set of conceptual goals; they were prompt and conscientious in their work, and in their attendance at the in-house day.

However, many students combined this "ideal" path with some version of that previously described. They might fall behind schedule in one particular course, for example. A regular pattern was for students to do well in the first semester, and then cycle into a period of general inactivity during much of second semester with a final frantic burst of work to complete their courses. All LC's identified students' failure at self-scheduling as a major problem in the program; it may be an inevitable consequence of the change from a system of external control to one of internal motivation.

The LC-Student Conference: Placement Activities

In addition to sustaining the student's academic program, the LC-student conference is also the time when the student is aided in making placement decisions. The complicated placement process itself is described in the next chapter; we wish to indicate here some of the many tasks which the LC must carry out. Placement involved the LC's not only in several conferences with the student but in phone calls and memos sent to the Placement Coordinator. The LC also discussed with the student any problems with his current placement site, especially in regard to attendance. This might lead to counseling about the student's responsibilities to the RP and to other students whom he might prejudice by setting up a pattern of poor relations at the site.

LC's tried to develop activity sheets related to student work at the placement sites. They also checked over the career guides which the student filled out; since students frequently failed to complete these or did so only perfunctorily, reminding the student about this work was generally necessary. However, the LC's evaluation of these guides was also casual. She might skim over the set of three guides in five or ten minutes.

Time actually spent in placement activities was usually divided equally between dealing with the many procedures and forms, and dealing with student problems at the site. A major problem with regard to the latter is that students are often inarticulate about their dislike of a site, and may offer explanations which seemed trivial to the LC. "I have to walk ten blocks when I get there." Dislikes and tensions with the RP, a certain amount of routine work which the student finds boring, little direct attention from the RP--these are problems which repeatedly occur. Although LC's were sympathetic to the student's point of view, they often saw these problems as surmountable with growth in the student's self-confidence, or as inevitable in the world of work.

The LC-Student Relationship

The student's progress during the course of the program is heavily dependent upon the relationship developed with his LC. This is part of the intended structure of the program.

> The learning coordinator has the responsibility of managing and/or delivering a complete program of experiences for each of his students. This type of teaching arrangement, in contrast to the departmentalized approach typical of secondary education, emphasizes the need for a strong, positive relationship, since it is quite natural for a staff member to become involved in all facets of a student's program and many aspects of his/her personal life.
>
> Joe Fisher: Career Education and Process Counseling (Manuscript)

The quality and course of this relationship is complex, and will be different for every student. There are, however, both program effects and social structural variables which consistently shape the relationship.

One of the program effects upon the LC-student relationship derives from scheduling. In terms of the yearly cycle, there are certain periods of intense activity such as the orientation period and the semester reporting periods. The orientation period is the student's introduction to the program and his LC. During the first two weeks of the school year, the LC must explain the program to the students, and meet with each one to review his high school graduation requirements. She advises the student in choosing his courses, guides him through the McBee sort procedures to select subconcepts and objectives, and begins developing activity sheets for each course.

The LC must also initiate site placement by compiling a profile of the student's interests, both those he expresses and those emerging from various test intruments which the LC administers. The student must be guided through the Experience Site Access System to determine a first possible set of placements; the LC must then actually set up the first placement. An additional difficulty is that the placement system places a heavy burden on the LC at this time since all students must be placed within a short time interval. Each LC must introduce all of her/his assigned students to their sites at this time as well.

Although we were not able to observe this early part of the program, students were asked about their recollections of the period. Responses ranged from "I really don't remember much about it," "mass confusion," and "boring," to "Here we were, meeting in a group with ten other people when we expected to be out on a job. Later on it worked out but I thought it was another rip-off then." Although the progress of the year brought many changes in their perceptions, this period seems critical in establishing attitudes and commitments between the student and his LC.

This is especially true given the weekly scheduling cycle of the program. A student in a traditional high school may have seen a teacher as many hours in the first two weeks of school as an AEL-EBCE student sees his LC in eight weeks. Clearly, the quality of the meetings in the two situations is quite different. The point we are making is that the student-LC relationship requires a great deal of time to achieve ease and comfort, and initial bad impressions can endure for a long period.

Another variable which affects the student-LC relation is the change in institutional sub-cultures. Some students find it difficult to switch from an attitude of respect for and distance from a teacher to one of mutual responsibility and close personal relationships. Others, whose school career had resulted in alienation and hostility to the educational establishment, perceived the new atmosphere as one in which "you could get away with murder."

The major social structural variable which impinged upon relationships between students and staff was class background, although minority group membership of the LC's was also critical at times. In the Charleston area, middle and lower class subcultures vary greatly in life-style, activity patterns, values, and career concerns as well as attitudes toward public institutions. Many program goals as well as staff attitudes unconsciously reflected a prevailing middle-class orientation.

Also, each LC had a personal "style" of relative informality, in both dress and behavior, as well as an individual manner of applying the program and expressing interest in and commitment to the students. These factors, added to those described above, occasionally resulted in mismatches between students and LC's such that the communication necessary to the student's growth in the program was lacking.

In these situations it was easy for the students to blame program failures on the LC. "She's not fair to some of her students." "Me and her just don't get along. I can't ever figure out what she wants." "When she told me I had to write my own activity sheets, I figured that was her job that she was trying to push off on me. I went to [the Operations Director] to complain and he explained it as another notch or responsibility. I just don't communicate with her." "She's visited me on one site all year. She don't know what's going on out there."

In general, however, LC's overcame these barriers to establish good personal relationships with their students. Many students mentioned that their friendship with their LC was a major motivation for academic work. "They don't just say 'that was wrong'. It'll be something like - 'Hey, why did you do that?'" Georgia said, "You keep on working because you don't want to let a friend down." Students also turned to their LC's for help in solving personal problems. Upon occasion, parents would call the LC for counseling about problems with their children. In general, LC's were committed to their students, and the students responded well to this personal concern.

The Counseling Session

At the beginning of the school year, group sessions with the Guidance Counselor were held twice daily, from 11:00 - 12:00 AM and from 1:00 - 2:00 PM. Later in the year the afternoon session was discontinued. Students could choose to attend either session or not to attend at all. Attendance varied from 19 to 0, with the mode for meetings observed 7-8. The larger groups were assembled for administration of test instruments.

The general purpose of the sessions was to aid students in identifying career and life interests. One method used was the administration of occupational inventory instruments. When scores were returned to the students, the Counselor discussed some of the implications of the profile for career choices. Students seldom carried on discussions about these scores with one another or with the Counselor, although many students mentioned to us that they found their test profiles interesting.

At other sessions, students were encouraged to trade placement experiences with one another. In one session which we observed, students filled out forms which elicited a set of information about one placement, and reported to the other students in the session on the information they had compiled from personal experience and research in the Occupational Outlook Handbook. The forms were put on file for other students to consult. Students seemed little interested in this exchange of information, however. At least part of the reason lay in the evident dislike many of them had for filling out forms.

Another activity which we observed several times was open discussion among students; this occurred occasionally during the early part of the school year. The Counselor made it clear that the session was open to the discussion of any subject in which the students were interested. They seldom took him up on the offer; on at least two occasions no one was interested in talking about anything with the whole group, although many private conversations went on.

This lack of interest was a reflection of their general attitude toward the Counseling Session. Although most students respected the Counselor and went to him with their problems, they saw no reason to share these with the larger group. Important lateral communications among students were limited to the informal groups which developed over the year, and the Counseling Sessions never developed a unity which encouraged interaction across these groups. Discussions which did get started tended to be dominated by two or three more articulate students, and other students quickly tired of hearing the well-known opinions of these few.

By the middle of second semester, many students attended these sessions from a sense of duty to the program, their friendship with the counselor, or because there was nothing else to do while in-house. A large minority ceased attending entirely.

Academic Seminars

Near the end of the first semester, the Operations staff set up special seminars to help students who were behind in their work catch up. These continued through second semester, although by the end of the school year few students attended. Each LC conducted seminars in his or her own fields of expertise. Students were able to complete an activity sheet for each seminar attended. Activities included working with textbooks, doing social science experiments and exercises, and slide shows.

Since the original purpose of the seminars was to help students who were behind schedule, they were seen as somewhat punitive. Although some of the work was interesting, students did not see the work as personally valuable; the activity sheet completion rather than the conceptual exploration was perceived as the goal of the seminar.

Informal Groups and Activities

Students spent much of their in-house day in social interaction within small peer groups. Although each student became acquainted with other students scheduled for the same in-house day over the year, they maintained the closest ties with other students from the same home high school.

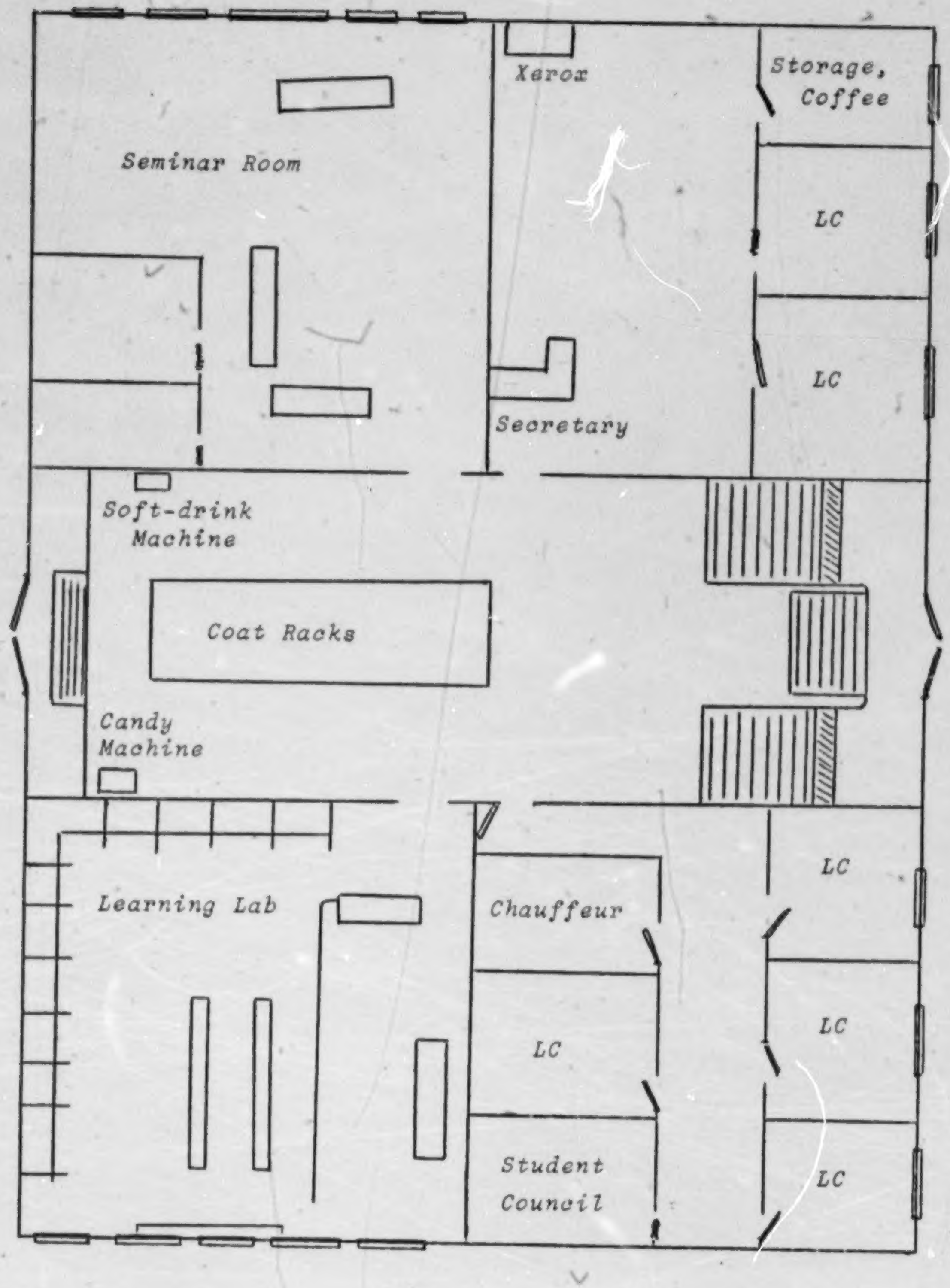
These informal groups were important in terms of the effect they had upon student participation in the program structure. First, they were major sources of information about site placements, program procedures, LC's, and operating strategies. Perhaps more important was their function in determining how students spent the major portion of the in-house day. Ideally, students should spend time not allocated to the intended structured activities such as the LC-student conference in working on their academic assignments. An actual picture of the way they spent their time emerges from the summarization in the following section of a space-time census conducted hourly throughout one school week. Patterns were observed which persisted across the week and groups of students, which indicates that they are structural effects.

In-House Activity Patterns

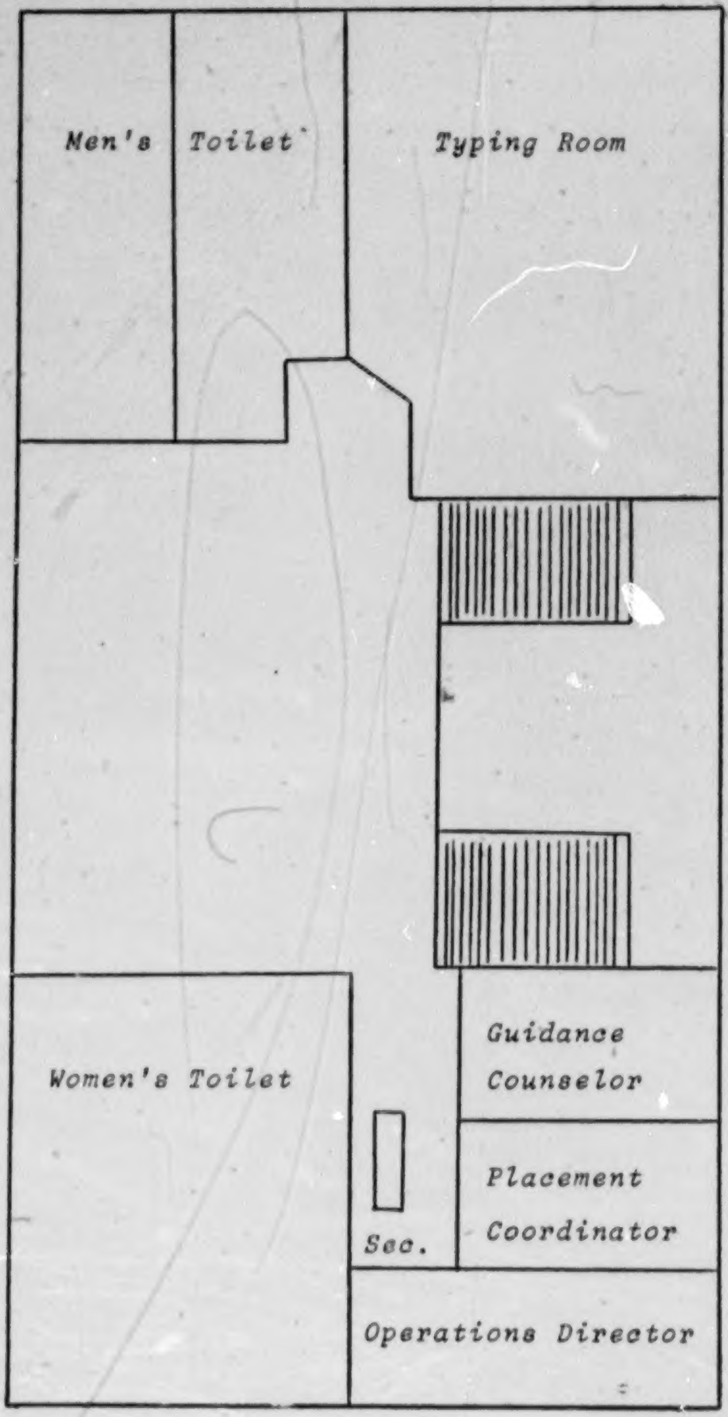
Activity commenced at the Learning Center at 8:00 AM. Students who required chauffeured transportation to job sites arrived between 8 - 8:30 AM and the cars left by 8:45. Students spending the day in-house arrived between 8 and 10:00 AM; most arrived by 9:15.

When students arrived, they signed in at the secretary's desk in the first floor office. (See Maps 1 and 2 on following pages.) The secretary, who acted as a central information node for both students and staff, passed on official announcements or personal messages to students as they came in. Some remained grouped about her desk, chatting about topics generally unrelated to the program. Occasionally, a student or LC began to work at the copy machine or the adding machine located in this office.

Other students moved into the large seminar room, generally in groups of three to four (range 1 to 8). Each group tended to separate itself from the others in the room. The modal pattern when larger numbers were in the room was a group of three or four, usually women; a couple sitting apart from the main group; and one or two



Map 1. Sketch of the Floor Plan: First Floor of Learning Center



Map 2. Sketch of the Floor Plan: Basement Floor of Learning Center

people moving among these and other groups in different parts of the Learning Center.

In this room, students may work on activity sheets, particularly earlier in the day before their appointments with their LC's. They may joke with one another about their work load, or compare the number of points they received on similar projects (such as a long essay), but there is no discussion of the content of their work. Each has different work, and many have entirely different courses.

More often, activity was social. Students talked about what they did outside of school, planned excursions together, or played cards. At the time of the census, there was a continuing double solitaire game going on which attracted many students as both players and spectators. Members of the staff would also occasionally join the game. Loud, joking complaints by the loser would draw more people in to watch.

As the seminar room began to fill with these small groups, those students who arrived later might stop by to chat with one or two people in the room. However, they were more likely to move on to the corridor where most of the offices of the LC's were located. There they might meet with their LC for their weekly appointment, or borrow books and materials, or just check in. Several of the LC's might be out introducing students to sites, or making early morning visits; two or three students often used these empty offices as gathering places. Along this corridor were two offices, the Student Council room, and the Chauffeur's office where students also gathered in small groups of two or three to play cards, talk, or work on activity sheets.

The learning lab, which contained the small library and some desks, was usually deserted. Occasionally a student studied here (1-2 times per day); less frequently two or more people were using the room to study separately (3 times per week); rarely will a group gather. No smoking was allowed in this room, and it was usually quiet.

On some days there were students downstairs in the basement, working on assignments for the secretarial procedures course or practicing their typing. At any given hour only one student was likely to be working. The secretarial course met on Thursday mornings. Occasionally, students were found in the basement section but they rarely congregated there. The Counselor and the

Operations Director had offices located along one corridor of the basement, and students occasionally met with these staff members individually.

The groupings in the various locations within the Learning Center were fairly stable, although the members and numbers in the groups fluctuate throughout the first two hours of the morning. This was also the period when many students met with their LC's. During these appointments, most of the LC's had only one student in their offices; occasionally another student entered to get a form or look in his file, but seldom stayed if the discussion was related to school work. One LC usually had three or four students in her office, and dealt with various conversations or problems while other interactions were going on or students sat and listened.

At 11:00 AM the grouping pattern changed. All students in-house were expected to attend the Counseling Session. Four to twelve students attended the session, and often continued to sit and talk in small groups instead of attending to the matter before the whole group. A few students in the building did not attend the session because they had previously attended a session that week, had finished the work scheduled, or didn't choose to attend. These students tended to cluster in small groups of two to four in the central hall, in the front office near the secretary's desk, and along the LCs' office corridor on the main floor.

Students began to leave for lunch between 11:00 and 11:30, singly and in small groups of two to five. By 11:45 most students had gone out to lunch; some brought their lunches and ate in one of the two small offices or in the large seminar room. LC's and secretaries gathered in one of the larger LC offices; occasionally a student joined them there. On some days, students organized a basketball game at the nearby college over the lunch hour.

Many students did not return from lunch. Four to eight students remained in the building, and a few more returned by 1:30 PM. Some students came in for the first time to meet their appointment with their LC's. Between 1:30 and 2:30 the student population ranged from four to twelve, with a mode of eight.

In addition to a few appointments with LC's, the only scheduled student activity in the afternoon was the seminar. Attendance at these sessions varied from zero to six; when fewer than four students were present, the LC in charge dismissed the session.

Students who remained during the afternoon generally gathered in groups of two or three in the LC offices, chatting with one another or with one of the LC's. Occasionally students worked individually in the offices of their LC's. Others leave to work on Physical Education activities.

Between 2:30 and 3:00 PM, the chauffeurs left to pick up students from their job sites. After returning to the Learning Center, these students often lingered to talk briefly with one another or with their LC's before dispersing.

CHAPTER 5

STUDENTS ON SITE: THE PLACEMENT

The Experience-Based Career Education program developed by Appalachia Educational Laboratory (AEL) revolved around the site placement. With each new placement, the student enters into a one-to-one relationship with a Resource Person at an employer site, which may last as many as thirteen weeks, or as few as one. For the duration of the placement, the site experience is considered to be the focus of the student's program at AEL; the academic side of the program should be structured around the placement, and the Learning Coordinator is enjoined to write activity sheets relevant to the student's placement. AEL's placement focus is reflected in the way that the student's time is budgeted between "on-site" and "in-house": most students are expected to spend four days out of every five at their placements, and on these days they may not even report to the Learning Center. (A few students spend only three days per week on-site, and two days in-house. These students are those with remedial needs and those especially concerned with college preparation.) The site experience is thus a major variable in each student's participation in EBCE, and his over-all feeling about the program is in large part determined by the quality of his site experiences, and the nature of his relationships with Resource People.

The Placement Process

The decision to embark upon a placement at a specific site is ultimately the student's to make. For that reason it is important to examine the various sources of information regarding sites, and the quality of the information available to students at the time that decisions concerning placements are made. Information source and quality are clearly temporally-governed variables, with students and LC's both becoming increasingly familiar with the range of available site experiences as the year progresses. However, in the early phases of the first semester, the student has no information upon which to base his decision, other than that which AEL presents to him in "packaged" form.

Information Package: The Learning Guides

It is the responsibility of the Placement Coordinator (or the Resource Analyst, in earlier program phases) to develop Learning Guides for employer sites in the resource pool. These guides present the inquisitive student with an array of significant information: Where is the site?, How does one get there?, What is made or done at the site?, What kinds of jobs exist there?, What would a placement there involve?, What restrictions are there upon age, sex, dress, smoking, or decorum? The potential value of the learning guides in providing students with information concerning sites is mitigated by several factors:

a) Appropriateness of the analysis to the resource pool. While about 90% of the sites have been described by guides, the standardized format of the guide is most appropriate to large institutions which offer a variety of possible placements. Many sites in the resource pool are not of this type.

b) Infrequent student use of guides. In practice, students rarely consult the guides when they make decisions about sites, particularly after they have been in the program for some time. Students are far more responsive to "personal" information than to the packaged information provided through the project, and if they want to know something about a site would rather ask a student who has been there than consult a learning guide.

If students refer to the learning guides at all, they are most likely to do so with their LC's after a site has been selected, to find out the kinds of restrictions placed upon the student who goes there. However, it would appear that this is not done frequently enough to prevent problems from arising. On one occasion, a regular staff meeting was devoted entirely to illustrating the various problems that result from the failure of students and their LC's to consult the learning guides prior to initiating placement requests. For most students, it would seem that the information contained within the learning guide tends not to be a part of the decision process that leads to the placement. A very few students, though, use the guides in much the manner for which they were intended. As one student said: "I made sure that I knew about all the job sites, because I didn't want to miss anything. Whenever I got bored sitting around, I'd just go through that book to find out about them."

Information Package: The Experience Site Access System

The AEL program recognizes the fact that many students enter EBCE not knowing what they want to do. They lack career priorities, and so can not make effective use of the information available to them in making decisions about placements. To accommodate these students, AEL has formalized the decision-making process into a procedure that may be termed the Experience Site Access System. An interesting feature of the system is that it begins by providing the student with information about himself. This information is subsequently utilized to "track" the student onto suitable experience sites. There are three components to the access system:

1) A series of vocational preference tests is administered to the student during the Orientation period of the first semester. One of these, the Kuder Occupational Interest Survey, is not strictly a part of the access system, but appears to be used as a check upon the two AEL-devised instruments that constitute this first component. These are the Work Activity Checklist (designed to assess "Work Interest" factors), and the Occupational Situation Demands Checklist (designed to assess "Temperament" and "Personality" factors). Either of the AEL checklists may be administered. Unlike the Kuder test, the AEL instruments provide the student with coded information regarding his preference structure, which does not become intelligible (is not decoded) until the second component of the access system is completed.

2) The coded "interest" or "temperament" factors provided by the checklists are used by the student as information inputs into a McBee Keysort Deck. This second procedure identifies the "Worker Trait Groups" in which he is most interested. Although this information is intelligible to the student, it is vague and insufficiently site-specific to be of value in making placement decisions.

3) Site specificity is provided by the Community Experience Site Control System, which cross-references the Worker Trait Group numbers with specific experience sites and Resource People.

The Access System procedure requires, then, that students think about themselves and their career preferences in a generalized, abstract way, whereupon the system will provide them with information regarding the specific sites that are most suitable. The decisions that students make, in this situation, do not deal with sites, but with statements about themselves, from which they must select those that are most or least appropriate. This may be of value for students who lack clear-cut priorities, but it does not replicate real-life decision-making processes. The access system has the undoubted virtue of providing students with some kind of information about relevant sites. However, the quality of this information is dependent upon the following factors:

a) The size of the resource pool. If the number of sites is fairly small, then the Worker Trait Group numbers that feed out of the keysort procedure may not access onto any sites. The student will then be directed to fill out the second of the AEL checklists, and to run through the McBee sort with a second set of inputs. Another consequence of a limited resource pool is that students with highly specialized fields of interest may access onto sites which bear only a minimal resemblance to their actual preference. The size of the pool could easily be expanded by considering various AEL personnel as potential resources. Some steps in this direction have been made, but the range of skills possessed by the staff has been only minimally explored.

b) The accuracy and imagination of the resource analysis. If the Community Experience Site Control Manual is to provide students with suitable placements, the Worker Trait Groups must be accurately and imaginatively assigned to the sites that are cross-referenced. If the site analyst is insufficiently informed about the parameters of the jobs held by Resource People, or does not understand them in depth, the assignment of worker trait groups will be misleading.

c) The student test-taking attitude. The utility of the entire Access system is dependent upon the extent to which the student takes the AEL checklists seriously. If these instruments are regarded as trivial, useless, boring or unimportant, the Interest and Temperament factors (which are information inputs) will not be accurate or meaningful, and the purpose of the access system is subverted. The checklists are first administered during the Orientation period, when students are simultaneously exposed to a lengthy battery of other tests. One student said of this experience, "I must say I learned a little bit from all those tests. Mostly, though, they were things the upstairs people [the Evaluation Staff] needed. I didn't see how they applied to me in many cases." In addition to many tests of seemingly limited value, the Orientation period involves a great deal of student "dead time". This is because there are fewer McBee sort decks than there are students, and because most of the other orientation procedures must be conducted on a one-to-one, student-to-LC basis. As a result, students sit around for several days during orientation with nothing real to do, but many tests. Student comments indicated that this context decreased the seriousness with which they approached the checklists. This in turn would affect the quality of the information that the system provides to students regarding sites.

Student reaction to the Access System is varied. One student told us, "If I used the cards to find a placement, I would try to find someone who had been there and ask them about it." This appears to be a common sentiment. Another student's comments illustrate her surprise at how valuable the suggestion of the Access System turned out to be for her. "The first time I used the cards I came up with photography, and I said to my LC, 'God, let's get rid of that one, I don't like photography.' But she told me to give it a try, so I did, and it turned out to be something I really wanted. Every one of my placements since then has had something to do with photography, and for sure it's going to be part of whatever career I find."

Temporal Variation in Information Sources

Under the proper conditions, the site information access system can be a useful tool. It is probably of the greatest benefit for students who enter EBCE with their interests and preferences unclear, because it provides them with a decision-making mechanism that is activated by their latent preference structure. Students who enter EBCE with well-defined interests, on the other hand, may find their preferences replicated by the sort procedure, and in this way reinforced. Almost the entire student population at AEL had a first placement that "came up in the cards", and the over-all reaction to this first placement tended to be favorable.

In time, though, the access system comes to be less and less frequently used by students as a source of information regarding appropriate sites. Other, less formal sources begin to play a more prominent role in the decision process, as in the case of a student who found out about Sunrise Children's Museum (his favorite site) "by general osmosis--hearing about it all the time at school." Peer assessments of resource sites, which largely relate to the personal dimension of being in a place for several weeks, tend to assume the greatest importance. Some sites, like the Children's Museum, are the "fun sites," and are avidly sought, despite the limited career options available for exploration. At other sites, getting along requires access to "special information" that is generally not included in the learning guide, as in the case of a motorcycle repair shop: "They have this big dog there, called Max, and he's supposed to prevent people from ripping things off. Whenever a new fellow comes into the back room Max just jumps on him, not attacking or anything, but playing rough. If you don't get scared, he figures you belong and the two of you will get on okay; but if you don't know how to deal with big dogs, and all his growling starts to worry you, then forget it! You won't be able to get any work done there because he'll never leave you alone."

Many students make decisions about sites, not on the basis of career potential, but for the sake of personal experiences they may have with people. This kind of information is rarely available through the access system, so students resort to peer and LC assessments. There are, however, many students who will have learned something about their career interests--or at least their career disinterests--after only one or two placements. At this point, a change is likely to occur in their decision-making processes, which will make the access system less relevant to them. As student career maturity increases, interests tend to become less general and more specific. The access system, however, begins at a level of low interest specificity, with the two checklists that are concerned with self and one's abstract preferences.

As soon as the student's priorities have been at all clarified, he is quite likely to ignore the sort procedure and trust his own judgment.

We may conclude that both the major source and the quality of information utilized by students in making decisions concerning sites changes considerably over the course of the year. During the first months at AEL, the Experience Site Access System and, to a limited degree, the learning guides are most important as information sources. Subsequently, the students' own preferences, and the assessments of the sites by LC's and other students become more significant, and the access system is less frequently utilized. For these students, the decision-making process is characterized by an increasing informality, and increasing specificity of interest. There exists, however, a small group of students who continue searching for priorities, and who return to the checklists and the cards every time they must make decisions about their site placements.

In general though, it would appear that a consequence--perhaps unintended--of the utilization of the access system is its increasing disuse by most students. Early use of the system propels them out to sites, where they learn something about those sites and their own interests. The access system is never abandoned altogether, because LC's try to get their students to explore a variety of career fields, which means returning "to the cards" for information. But for many students it might be said that the utilization of the Access System is a self-limiting phenomenon.

Structure of the Placement Pool

The various sources of information described in the preceding section provide the student with a range of site choices from a specific pool of community resources. Obviously, this pool has not encompassed, nor can it, the entire Charleston community; nor can it be infinitely diverse in a city whose population is only 75,000. The strengths and weaknesses of the resource pool--its variety and its scope--determine the range of site experiences available to students, and thus set definite limitations on the flexibility of the EBCE program in Charleston.

Certain restrictions are entirely externally imposed. Because of State Law and insurance provisions, individuals under 18 years of age may not be present where industrial processes of specific sorts occur. Most seniors in the

AEL program are only 17 years old, and so they are barred from all areas of industrial plants, and from all phases of coal mining (W. Virginia's biggest business) which are affected by Hazardous Occupations or Child Labor Laws. "Union Shops" will not allow non-union students into some places. Still other careers are not represented in the pool because the work involved is too critical for untrained persons to be present (i.e., brain surgery). A final category of careers consisting of very highly specialized professionals is not in the pool because the Charleston community does not require, or cannot support their services.

Of the employer sites listed in the pool, a small proportion of them are not in fact utilized. On occasion, businesses in the community will express a willingness to become employer sites in the EBCE program, but turn out to be "too busy" to actually accept students when finally approached. Other businesses may discover that they are too busy, or that they are unsuitable employer sites, only after a student has been placed with them, and they have had the experience of trying to keep a high school student busy for four days every week. If the Resource Person fails to respond to the student's presence in an interesting, sensitive way, the placement experience may be mutually traumatic. Such employer sites are fortunately in the minority. Of the 100-plus employer sites in the resource pool, only about 60-70 of them are ever used; of these, 40 are used frequently, and roughly 15 are "high populars" with students.

Of the resource pool actually utilized by students, it was observed that relatively few sites introduced students to upper-level professional careers. A few of the careers that students investigated were of the professional and skilled categories (Nurse, Teacher, Veterinarian, Draftsman); the majority were "blue-collar" or service positions (Auto Mechanic, Secretary). This lower-middle to working-class bias in the available employer site pool contrasts sharply with the students' own preliminary career choices. Fully 40% expressed an interest in "professional level" careers, the next highest category of response (approximately 10%) being "don't know. (AEL Final Evaluation Report 1974 p. 13. ETS interview data from 1975 roughly coincides, with 41% of student interest assignable to "professional level" careers.) However, it is important to note that the structure of the actual employer site pool corresponds, in a rough-and-ready way, with the employment pattern of the students' fathers. Their occupations fell in five major categories: "Craftsman," Laborer, Managerial/Administrative, Operative and Professional (AEL Final Evaluation Report, 1974, p. 9).

While they are incomplete, these statistics tend to support the conclusion that the AEL program presents its students with a realistic picture of career oportunities in the Charleston area. The resource pool has an under-representation of careers in the professional/creative fields, but this merely reflects the under-representation of these careers in the community as a whole. The range of employer sites available to students is fairly representative of the world of work in Charleston, West Virginia, with the absence of sites where student participation is prohibited by law. In this way students receive an early exposure to the limitations of their community, and are presented with a reasonably accurate assessment of their employment prospects after graduation.

Future employment prospects clearly enter into the students' decisions regarding experience sites via several routes:

1) Later employment at experience site. Many EBCE students who "work out well" at their experience sites receive job offers from the Resource People with whom they have associated. Sometimes these jobs commence even before graduation as part-time positions, as in the case of one student who had a placement at the maintenance facility of a car dealership: "I'm there at eight sharp every morning, and I work four hours getting credit in Career Education. Then, after lunch, I "punch in", and work four more hours, getting paid." Positions such as these convert to full-time, permanent jobs after graduation. It is estimated that 40-45% of the AEL students find jobs of this nature through contacts made at resource sites. One male AEL student said, in assessing this aspect of the program, "I know a lot of girls who are going to Union Carbide, and working their tails off for 13 weeks as secretaries. Then, after school's over, she'll send in a job application to the guy she worked for. She'll get hired, too, because she's known. It really helps to have been in a place for a while, when you're looking for a job. You know who to go to, you know a name. You can walk into a place with a little more confidence." AEL students are well aware of the potential for finding a job at experience sites: at least one student got a job at his site and has now become a Resource Person for the

EBCE program. Students may therefore deliberately choose from the resource pool specific sites where they feel they may be able to find subsequent employment.

2) Greater future employability. The job market in the Greater Charleston area is extremely tight. Many high school graduates with their fresh diplomas find themselves in the "Catch-22" of the unemployed: no one will hire them because they have no experience because no one will hire them! The EBCE program helps students to break out of this vicious cycle by giving them an opportunity to acquire experience without actually being employed. Even as brief a period as one or two months at a given employer site will give the student an edge over the competition he will encounter in trying to find employment in a similar position. Students at EBCE with specific career interests see the program as a way of getting as much experience as possible in their chosen fields before their entry into the competitive world of the job-seeker. Some students have sufficient foresight to collect letters of recommendation from Resource People with whom they have good relationships, in anticipation of the time when references will be essential to finding employment. The student, previously referred to, who developed an interest in photography through the AEL program told us, "This year I've managed to put together a portfolio of all the different kinds of work I've done at the sites, and I've got a letter of recommendation from every resource person I've spent much time with. I figure it might help me get a job later on."

Although the AEL program was not specifically designed to serve as an ad hoc employment agency, this appears to be one of its unanticipated functions. If students are not aware of this feature prior to their entry into the program (it is not mentioned during recruitment), they soon learn of its existence, and consider the improvement in their prospects for employment after graduation one of the advantages of participation. It is noted that the developers include placement as a part of the total career development process in their description of the program.

The Organizational Response

Once the student has decided to request a placement at a specific employer site, he is faced with a lengthy and complex organizational response to his decision that determines first whether, and then when the placement will go through. The "typical" organizational response consists of the following stages:

1) The LC approves the student's site selection.

2) A Site Placement Request Form is filed with the Placement Coordinator.

3) The Placement Coordinator determines the availability of the site and schedules the commencement date of the student's placement.

4) This information is relayed to the Head Secretary and the Chauffeurs, who will work the student into the school's transportation schedule, or else calculate the simplest bus route and allot transportation funds.

5) On the first day of the placement, the student is escorted out to the site by his LC, and introduced to the Resource Person for that site.

6) The LC should make one more site visit in the first three weeks of the student's placement.

The time lag between stages one and five of the organizational response--that is between placement request and placement commencement--is rarely less than two working weeks. Further analysis of several of these stages in the organizational response follows:

1) Learning Coordinator Approval - LC's will rarely argue with a student's selection of a specific site, except in the case of a "touchy" site, where the LC may be reluctant to let certain students go. Such cases are exceptional. However, if the LC judges the student's overall academic progress as slow, and if the student is demonstrably behind schedule in accumulating points towards academic credit, the placement request may be temporarily shelved. The student may be required to

spend one or more weeks in-house, supposedly "catching up" on academics. This means doing reading assignments, filling out activity sheets, and other forms of "academic busywork". This has the effect of making these students feel that the time spent in-house or doing activity sheets is punitive, rather than a meaningful learning experience. Students frequently do not utilize their weeks in-house as their LC's intended them to, and their attendance records for those periods show marked declines.

2) Site Availability - Although there are almost twice as many experience sites as there are AEL students (and some sites take more than one student at a time), many sites have lengthy waiting lists of students who have requested placements. This is because a few of the sites are constantly selected by students, either because of their inherent "fun" interest, regardless of career or employment potential (Museums, radio and TV stations), or because of the personality of the specific Resource Person with whom the student will be associated. When more students apply for a site than there are positions there for them, the Placement Coordinator sets up a waiting list, whereby the site becomes available on a first-apply-first-serve basis. This bureaucratic process is hidden from the student, who has no real part in it. Many students don't fully understand the reasons why they can't go to the sites they have selected, any why they are forced to wait. When the LC learns from the Placement Coordinator that there will be a considerable wait for the site, she will make one or more of three suggestions to the student:

a) The student can remain at his present site (assuming there is no waiting list for the present site) until a new site is free.

b) The student may be charged to select a different site.

c) The student may remain in-house until the new site is free, during which period he will be assigned numerous activity sheets.

Any one of these alternatives may be satisfactory to individual students, depending on the circumstances. However, it seems useful to point out several general student reactions observed in response to these three suggestions. Many students did not apply for new sites unless they were dissatisfied with the old ones. Where dissatisfaction existed, students objected to remaining. The process itself of choosing an alternate site caused resentment among students who did not understand the placement process. The third alternative -- a stay in-house -- was also unappealing to many students, and had the unfortunate outcome of making the activity sheet seem less meaningful as a way of learning things. "It's just a fancy way of assigning homework," "It's makework," "It gets us out of the LC's hair for a few hours," are some student comments about this situation.

3) Transport arrangements - Regardless of the difficulty involved in transporting the student from home to site and back, some kind of arrangement is always made. This is one of the few infallible features of the program, one in which students have the utmost confidence.

4) Site contact - The first day of a new placement is a time of considerable tension for students, most notably in the early phases of the year, before they have had much experience in dealing with adults on a one-to-one basis. The student's tension is considerably reduced by the practice of having an LC (usually, though not invariably, his own) escort him to the site. This serves the further function of laying the foundation for future contact between the LC and the Resource Person concerning the student's activities on-site. It is unfortunate that the heavy demands placed upon the LC time prevents them from making the most of this opportunity. They have only a few minutes to spare before they are due back at the school.

If the employer site is within a fairly large organization, it frequently occurs that the LC does not introduce the student to the actual Resource Person, but to the Contact Person. This is usually the Administrator or Department Head who was contacted by the Resource Analyst (or the Placement Coordinator) when the site was first developed. After the LC has departed, the Contact Person will introduce the student to the Resource Person with whom the student will be associated for the weeks to come. The Contact Person, who is in fairly regular touch with the EBCE program, will usually have a reasonable understanding of it. The Resource Person in this situation, who is one step further removed from the contact with EBCE, may not comprehend the student's motives in coming to the employer site. The RP may think that the student is a volunteer, or is in a new kind of vocational education program, or is being trained for a job. Perhaps the most usual response to this confusing situation is for the Resource Person to consider the student a kind of assistant, and to request him to perform the busywork tasks that no one else has time for. "I had one placement where I was supposed to learn photography, but I wound up filing instead." Other students report spending weeks washing, sweeping, and collating.

A telling case of misplacement and misdirection of student effort was recounted to us by Ajax: "For my first placement I wanted something in Journalism and Graphic Arts. I went through the cards [the McBee sort deck and the Cross-Reference Catalogue] and got sent to _____. My RP there hadn't worked on EBCE and didn't know what to tell me to do. I was there for three weeks, and I spent two weeks just collating--putting books together--before I got to what I really wanted. . . There was one guy there I would have liked to work with more, but he seemed busy."

5) LC Site Visits - In order to prevent students from spending their time at employer sites engaged in inappropriate activities such as these, the AEL program specifies a certain minimum level of contact between the student's LC and the employer site. The LC is expected to escort the student to the site on the first day, and then to make at least one site visit every two to three weeks, in order to monitor the student's progress. Although the LC's are aware of the importance of their contact with employer sites, they are usually faced with a volume of paperwork that forces them to maintain only superficial communication with Resource People. On the other hand, at least one LC would spend long periods of time just rapping with the RP's, and getting to know them personally, before even mentioning the student. Most of the LC's, however, will go to a site, and begin asking about the student's "attendance" there. Then they may ask, "Is there anything wrong? Are you having any problems?", things which neither the student nor the RP would be very willing to discuss. If the LC is especially pressed for time, she may conduct her site visits over the phone. This makes it even less likely that they will receive any accurate assessment from the RP if the site placement has become a "problem". Sometimes the LC's will make a site visit only to discover that the student has not been at the site since the first day. This causes extreme embarassment on the parts of both LC and Resource Person, with the result that any subsequent use of the site may be made more difficult. LC's admit that they are in many instances reluctant to perform extensive,

conscientious site visits. They are hesitant to take up the valuable time of the professional people who are already cutting into their busy days for the sake of students. Rather than discuss the EBCE program or the individual student's needs at any length, they may limit their interaction to a perfunctory interview. There is also the tendency on the part of LC's to do multiple site visits, if there are more than one student at a given site. Certain employer sites, such as Union Carbide, or Thomas Memorial Hospital, may have five or six students placed there simultaneously, and one LC will do a cursory site visit for them all in the space of half a morning.

Although some of the LC's are quite diligent in making site visits, and do their best to maximize the student's experience on-site, it was observed that much of the responsibility for explaining the EBCE program passes on to the shoulders of the individual students. Some of them are insufficiently articulate, forceful, or comfortable with adults to do this well. If the placement turns out poorly, the student may inappropriately feel that it is his own fault.

Students On Site

The site placement is designed to be a fairly open-ended, unconstrained experience for the student. It is understood that what a student learns and does on-site cannot be programmed, but must grow out of his interest in the careers represented there, and the quality of his relationship with the RP. Nonetheless, AEL has decided to structure some portion of the student's time on-site by providing them with Career Guides. The three guides constitute an important part of the AEL "Program Delivery Package".

1) Career Exploration Guide - This first guide should be followed by students during the first three weeks of a site placement. It consists of a set of forms to be filled out by the student, forms which are intended to increase the student's career awareness and the maturity of his career decision-making. The guide includes a pre-written activity sheet related to the major career being explored (thus structuring a small chunk of "academic" time), and an evaluation form which the Resource Person uses to record student attendance on site, and his over-all analysis of the student's performance. The bulk of the guide consists of open-ended, extremely general questions dealing with the job parameters of the employer site.

Many students regard the Career Guides quite casually, and either fail to fill them out in their entirety, or else do so off-handedly. Those students who do make a serious attempt to follow the guides will discover that an hour's interview with their Resource Person will provide them with all the information they require. Marilyn said that on each of her site placements she would set up an interview with her RP to fill out the guide. "I'd explain to them what it was, and that a lot of the questions were really dumb."

Although it is well-intentioned, the Exploration Guide requires the students to ask questions that are irrelevant to many employer sites. In instances when the questions are seen as irrelevant, students complete the Guide as merely a required exercise, rather than as a procedure which will help them in the career awareness, decision-making process. The purpose of the Guides in promoting self-discovery may be further subverted if the LC's do nothing more with them than skim through to see if all categories are completed. Students who do not understand the heuristic nature of the Guides sometimes interpret the reaction of the LC's upon receiving the completed Guides as meaning that they do not consider the Guides useful either.

2) Career Investigation Guide - If the student remains on a site for more than three weeks, he is expected to complete a second career guide. This is intended to direct the student towards an examination of a career area in greater detail. Students do not find the Investigation Guide very useful in its present form. As a result, fewer than half of the students who extend their placements past three weeks ever complete the accompanying guide.

3) Career Specialization Guide - If a student placement lasts between five weeks and the maximum of thirteen, it is expected that he will complete the third guide in the series, the Career Specialization Guide. This last guide directs the student to take an in-depth look at a particular career area, and begin planning to acquire the necessary training for it. Few students ever complete this guide, although most students do in fact have at least one placement during the year that lasts five or more weeks. The Specialization Guide is irrelevant to many sites which, although popular, offer no real career opportunities (such as the Children's Museum), and it is not filled out when such placements are involved. In many cases, students ignore the guide because it requires them to perform activities considered empty, trivial and boring, such as filling out a "Function

Skills Chart" listing all of the action verbs that describe the career or job they are interested in. The parts of the guides that are meaningful are discarded along with the parts that are empty. The categories of questions posed by the guides are adult-oriented; they represent the kinds of information adults would want to know about careers. By filling out the guide, students should be learning about these adult categories, but because the guide itself is so uninteresting, this valuable opportunity is missed. If students fill out the guides at all, it is because they must complete a certain number of activities in order to get their Career Education credit.

The concept of Career Guides is one that has real potential for structuring the student's awareness of career potentiality and actuality, and for directing him towards increasing career maturity. Unfortunately, the guides that have been developed to date are uninteresting to students and largely irrelevant, in many cases, to their experiences; and students regard the task of completing them as an empty activity.

Placement Time Cycles

There is a marked tendency for site placements to occur in cycles of three weeks. Certain employer sites specifically request students to remain for a month or more, but almost all initial placements except for these few are scheduled for a three week period. Placement extensions are also highly likely to occupy a time span of three weeks. The reasons for this three-week time cycle date from experience and formative evaluation during the two preceding year of developmental activity. The organizational response to a student's placement request, as we have seen , is lengthy and complex, and the staff are consequently reluctant to undergo it unnecessarily. LC's will encourage students to "stick it out" on a site which bores them, to "try and get along with" a Resource Person whose temperament clashes with their own. The LC's will readily admit that this advice is given partly for their own benefit: they are trying to save themselves the hassle of finding a new placement for their student. But they also believe that learning to put up with things one isn't overly fond of is "valuable training for life." Their students, though, may tend to elude the potential benefits of this experience by failing to appear at an employer site they dislike for the remainder of their placements. When poor attendance of this occurs, the Resource Person may become understandingly annoyed. The set of annoyances may then become a source of conflict between the student and his LC.

If the LC is willing to let a student drop his placement, it is likely to take about two weeks to set up a new one. During that time the student remains in-house every day with "nothing to do but activity sheets." Students "stuck" in-house are likely to spend a minimum of time engaged in reading and other academic activities; most of the day is spent socially, idly chatting and playing cards. The LC's consider such students "disruptive" because they occupy the time of other students (in-house for only day per week) who have a great deal to do. Although "down time" of this sort is not considered wasted by the students, their LC's would prefer to minimize the length of time spent in-house waiting for a new placement.

Student Evaluation of Placements

What do students do on their sites? What kinds of experiences do they have? What are they really learning? These questions, which are central to an understanding of the EBCE program, are among the most difficult to answer, largely because of the extreme variation in response from one student to the next. As one RP at a hospital said, "The experience here depends almost totally, I would say, on the student. We have had students from your program here continuously for almost two years. Some of them have lacked motivation, and they just stood around doing very little. Some of them got involved and were quite helpful in reducing our workload. A few made their weeks here into a real education."

Jack's first few placement experiences illustrate some of the ways in which sites can "work out," as well as some of the reasons why they don't:

> When I first came to EBCE there were not sites open in Art, which was my main interest. The cards gave me an alternative--Bull Furniture, for Interior Decoration, and I went there for three weeks. It was an OK experience. I moved furniture around at first, then I got to watch how they set up windows and decorated houses. At the end of 3 weeks they let me decorate a window for display--a bedroom. That part was good. Interior Decoration wouldn't be a very good career for me, because I would find it hard to conform to popular tastes.

My second site was at Union Carbide, for Commercial Art. That one came up in the cards, too. It was really my first choice, but it wasn't open originally, so I had to wait the three weeks. At Carbide I really worked! I did everything that had to do with advertising. They needed a logo for the newspaper at their Louisiana plant, and I did that for them. Then they needed a heading for the department letterhead, and I did that. But photography was the surprising feature at Carbide. I saw them making photostats for the Carbide/United Way campaign, and the next week I started working with 35-mm cameras. I did a lot of product photography for them. My RP needed someone to work at slide production, so I did that. I was the first student to get into the photography section there, but even so, my RP understood the program. He made sure I learned all about the relationship of photography to Graphic Arts, which is my real career interest.

My third placement was at Kanawha Valley Multiple Listing, with their photographer. My RP loaned me a Pentax, because I didn't have my camera yet, and gave me all this film to blow. When he went out to the houses to take pictures, I went with him. We spent a lot of time just driving, and talking, and got to be good friends. Mostly I learned the darkroom from him: developing and printing. But we did all the other things that he does on his job. We put together the newsletter, and created a logo for their blood donor program, so I learned a lot about commercial advertising and graphics. I was there three weeks, for the first time, and then a couple of months later I went there again for four weeks.

My fourth placement was not so successful. I had just been doing photography, and my LC thought I needed something different. I went to a big department store, for advertising and design. I was working on their ads, and their window displays, but I cancelled out after two weeks. I was too interested in photography, and wanted to get back to it. It would have been a good placement otherwise.

> The fifth placement was back to Carbide for photography again, but this time it was a real problem. I cancelled after two weeks. I specifically requested a photography placement at Carbide, but there was some communications breakdown, and I didn't get it. The placement I got was all-purpose, and my LC never told me. That time, all I got to do at Carbide was collating and other busy work, so I cancelled right out.

From many student reports such as these, it was possible to extract some general criteria that students use in evaluating sites, and their experiences there. One major complaint was that students often went to a site expecting one kind of activity, and then got shunted onto something less desirable, as in Jack's second placement at Carbide. As Jack pointed out, this results from a communications breakdown between RP and LC and the student.

A second problem is that many sites offered students nothing to do. The tasks being performed there were too complex or critical for an untrained high school student with no prior experience, so the student was forced to "sit around and watch" for three weeks with nothing real to do. Students said that this made them feel foolish, and they would request another placement, or simply fail to attend one where they had no function. A successful site actually provides students with the hands-on experience promised by EBCE.

Students want to have a real position at the site, and not just a busywork, or makework position. When they are requested to spend their placement time stapling, filing, collating or cleaning, they feel demeaned and are easily bored.

Students want to learn something at their sites. They want to be provided with novel experiences, rather than perform tasks at which they are already proficient. They also wish to avoid exploitation of the skills they already possess. Carter recalled this experience: "I sat at one bench, and my RP sat at the bench next to it. We both did the same work, just as fast, only he got paid ten dollars an hour for doing it, and I got my credit in Career Education." Students do not mind working, even working hard, so long as they see what they are doing as a learning experience.

For some students, the site experience must be relevant to their outside interests, or their career choices. Those who have firmly-rooted career preferences, like Jack after he discovered photography, tend to be single-minded in terms of the experience sites that interest them. Their concerns are quite pragmatic. They want to acquire as much work experience as possible. Some wish to increase their future employability in general, while others hope to find a job at one of their sites.

In addition to these very general criteria, there were many variables of temperament and personality that affected the student's evaluation. The response to place was one of these. Some students liked to be around garages, or hospitals, or stores, and others did not, regardless of the kinds of jobs and careers represented there. The first few days of a placement were critical for certain students and not for others. Some would make snap judgments about sites, and if they disliked what they were doing would immediately cancel; others would be willing to stick it out, in the hope that it might turn into something better.

What is critically important is the student's individual style of dealing with people, and this can make or break a student's experience on a site. Two students, with different personal styles, can have totally different experiences at the same site. For example, when Wendy had a placement at a Recreation Center in a predominantly Black neighborhood, she was "grossed out by the dirty language" used there. David was placed there also, but enjoyed the experience because he was able to deal with Black banter.

Two students who were placed at an electronics repair shop came away with discrepant views on the potential of that site. Ed told us, "I knew a little bit about electronics, but I was still learning. I worked with my RP on everything. He would let me do a lot of mechanical things I knew--like tape recorder motors. I got to put a lot of stuff back together after he had taken it apart. Carter went there after I did, and he just complained about the place. He knew a lot more than I did, a lot more professional than I was. When he was there, he totally took over and wouldn't let anyone show him what to do. He did a lot of work there, but complained that he didn't learn anything. It was his own fault for not being willing to learn."

At Mountain Artisans, too, the student makes her own experience. Georgia, who was there for four weeks, said, "A lot of students who go there get juggled around, to do whatever they need them for. I didn't do it--I spoke up. It was hard to do it, but I wasn't about to sit and file all day. The LC should really be the one to make sure you do real work. But when Laura went to Mountain Artisans, they set her to covering buttons, and she was very bored. She complained to her LC, who just told her, "Hang in there, you're learning.'"

Students and Resource People

The kinds of employer sites available to AEL students range from large institutions with many possible resource people down to small businesses containing a single resource person willing to devote some time to students. There is a similarly great range of motivations on the part of the resource agencies which leads to the creation of an employer site.

The large institutions are usually recruited by a member of the AEL staff with wide social and business contacts in the community. The upper-level managerial personnel contacted by the site developer tend to respond favorably to an individual already known to them, if not personally then by reputation. The success enjoyed by AEL in developing certain crucial sites is in large part due to the personal qualities of particular site developers.

A frequent and important motivation for employer participation in the AEL program is civic concern. Many believe that "practical" education of the kind provided through EBCE is important not only to the students, it is good for all of the Charleston community. In addition, participation is seen as good public relations, providing a business with a maximum of public exposure, in a favorable light, at a minimum cost. Finally, many contact people have children in high school themselves, and are aware of the problems of increasing student disinterest and alienation from the experience of their children. By opening their places of business to EBCE students they are "doing their share" in finding solutions to these problems.

However, in many large institutions, the Contact Person may have only a few minutes of dealing with students before passing them down to the actual Resource Persons, with whom the students will work during their placements. These Resource Persons, who may be middle-level employees of the institution are not necessarily motivated by concerns of civic pride, public relations, or even genuine concern for the problems of contemporary high school students. For them, dealing with students may simply be the latest of their job assignments. The level of RP motivation is of the greatest importance to students, and while many RP's develop real commitment to the students and try to understand their problems, many others simply regard the student's presence as another entry in the long list of their adverse working conditions. If the RP is very busy, there may be no time to work extensively with the students. The highly motivated students may be able to find a place for themselves, but timid ones (the majority) may feel embarrassed to start right in working, and quite hesitant to interrupt a busy person so that they can ask what to do.

The small businessman participating in the AEL program has many of the same motivations as the Contact Person in the large institution, and tends to have a similar personal relationship to the Development Staff. There is a general feeling among RP's that students should get out of the classroom and have some experience in the real world. The small businessman in particular, who is likely to be self-made, stresses the limited value of his own high school "book learning" in helping him to attain his present position. (From the opposite perspective, though, many RP's think that the academic side of the program is inadequate.)

Mixed with this idealism, is the practical concern of the small businessman. One RP, a furniture refinisher, said quite frankly, "I can't afford to train an assistant, even though there's enough work here to keep one busy. While they're learning, they're not producing enough to pay their wages, and they're taking away from my work time. Then after months of learning, they might not work out, and I've got to find someone else and start training 'em all over again. Now, a student in your program is willing to come in and learn without being paid. It's like he's trying us out, and we're trying him out too. After a couple of months you both know if it's going to work out. This way, you get a trained assistant without having to pay for his education. As soon as Mike here graduates, he's coming to work for me full-time. He's already learned all he needs to about the business."

Since 40-45% of all AEL students find jobs through contacts made on-site, it would appear that the experience of this RP is not at all unique. Just as many students enter the AEL program because there is the possibility of finding a job through it, many RP's commit themselves to the EBCE program in the hopes of finding suitable employees.

CHAPTER 6

THREE STUDENTS

Marilyn

An 18-year old Senior from George Washington High School, Marilyn has always been a successful student. Even though she "spent the whole first year at GW partying," her grades were all A's and B's. She comes from an upper-middle class family; her father owns a downtown department store, and her mother is a nurse--a profession to which Marilyn has aspired ever since first grade.

Marilyn heard about the EBCE program from friends who had participated in it the year previously, and was immediately interested in applying. It meant, of course, leaving GW, where she was comfortable and had many friends who pressured her to remain. But EBCE offered her the opportunity to explore careers other than her chosen profession of nursing; later on, there would be no chance to find out about them. Marilyn's parents, though, were dubious as to the value that EBCE would have for her. Her father thought, at first, that it was a vocational school of some kind, and both her parents feared that EBCE might be a school for drop-outs. They also feared that she would miss out on the extra-curricular activities at GW. Both Marilyn and her parents were concerned that she might not get "enough book knowledge" at EBCE, and that she would be left with inadequate preparation for college. Despite these parental fears, she applied and was accepted.

David

Chronologically, David should have been a Senior from South Charleston High, but due to a steadily-worsening school record, came to EBCE as a Junior. By all standard indicators, such as test scores, David's academic potential was high. His attendance record, however, was so poor that David himself would assess his high school performance as "a high E average."

David heard about EBCE from a friend who was participating in the program. He says about his reasons for applying: "Things were getting very dark in high school for me. I was considering quitting. This (EBCE) was a little life-raft on the horizon." David had originally been chosen to be a member of the Control Group--meaning that he would be observed at South Charleston High, and not allowed to participate in EBCE--but both he and his parents repeatedly urged the staff to accept him as a full program participant. Eventually, "I was let in with the understanding that I would graduate in one year, even though I needed seven credits. However, I expected to go to EBCE and not have to work at all."

For David EBCE represented an escape, rather than a positive move in any particular direction. He hated both the discipline structure and the academic side of his home high school, and was desperate to find some alternative. His parents, at the same time, saw EBCE as a means of rehabilitating David back into the system. They were both service-oriented professionals--his mother a nurse, his father a counselor in a children's home--and clearly disturbed by his negative attitude towards education.

Georgia

Like Marilyn, Georgia was an 18-year old Senior from George Washington High School. Since she found herself, near the end of her Junior year, only one English credit short of graduation, Georgia could have attended summer school and finished high school a year early. Family finances, though, prevented immediate entry into college, so Georgia would have had to work for a year. Her school Guidance Counselor recommended the EBCE program, so that she would be in some kind of a learning environment for that period. Friends reported favorably to her about the EBCE program, though "no one said it was an easy way out." In the end, Georgia's motivations for applying sprang both from a rejection of the traditional high school environment, and hopeful expectations of learning about the career of her choice: photography.

High school was oppressive for Georgia. She didn't like being taught "straight out of a book," and she was offended by the "superior attitudes" of her teachers. She thought that EBCE would be "much better than a regular school, with more responsibility for the student. You feel like you're a human being, not a number." Goergia also had definite ideas about career exploration. "That's what makes me different from a lot of the students here. Most of them didn't know what they wanted to do. I was hoping I'd find a lot of job sites dealing with photography."

Georgia saw EBCE as a kind of half-way house between high school and the beginning of her career in art school, learning Photography. "I would have been lost going to college this year. I wouldn't have known some important things about photography. I like the idea of going there and knowing a little bit before I start. It makes me feel more secure." Georgia's parents, however, had early reservations and doubts about EBCE. "My father thinks that this is too easy for me, and I agree. I wouldn't have gone here if I were planning to go to a liberal arts college where academics would be very important." Her parents nevertheless shared Georgia's objections to the atmosphere in her home high school, and approved her search for an alternative. Had she needed much more than one academic credit for graduation, their approval might not have been so ready.

Orientation

Marilyn thought the first few days of Orientation were extremely boring. "There were so many students, and so many forms to fill out." She found the conceptual card sort to be fairly interesting, "not that I really used it once we got into academics." The career card sort "let me know what was available. There were no surprises." Marilyn changed her LC in the second week of the semester, because she was worried about academics, and wanted an LC with the right background to tutor her in Physiology. To allow for more time working on academics, Marilyn opted to spend two days per week in-house, instead of just one, and only three days per week on sites, rather than four.

Orientation was "a drag" for David, because "nine-tenths of the time you were waiting, and the rest of the time you were rushed." The card sort and other procedures "were interesting, but I was in awe of them. I had never done them before. I was surprised that they came out accurate to my interests. I figured they would send me to a bakery or something, but nursing, recreation and psychology came up. I had thought of them before, and they appealed to me."

Georgia recalls the first week of Orientation as "mass confusion." During that time "we learned about the cycle of learning (the Inquiry Wheel). I don't understand that thing at all. I don't even look at it." The conceptual card sort "didn't do anything for me." Georgia says of the placement card sort that "it gave me a chance to see the job sites, but other than that, nothing much. I got Art, a little in teaching, and working with land. There was nothing that surprised me."

Academics

Marilyn is highly conscientious, both about attendance and her academic activities. Her LC says, "It's been work for me just trying to keep with the work she's done. She goes way beyond my expectations. She's chosen and written many hard activity sheets." Marilyn's file bulges with 20 page products, whereas other students would have been satisfied with reports that ran 3-4 pages. She frequently uses materials obtained at job sites in doing her projects. When placed at a hospital pharmacy, Marilyn decided to do a project on the effects of birth control pills and ovulant stimulants on the reproductive system. Marilyn's RP's are frequently used as academic sources, as when a teacher at a school for retarded children assisted her on a project dealing with the different forms of developmental disabilities. "The best part of the academics at EBCE," Marilyn says, "is that you can pick what you want to study. I didn't do things that I've done for years and years." Another part of Marilyn's schedule was an independent programmed-learning typing course, which seemed less productive that her other work. "I took it for a whole year and I still can't type. I spent so much time doing it and it was all wasted."

Marilyn's days in-house were generally spent engaged in academic work: sitting in her LC's office doing activity sheets, or downstairs in the typing room. The guidance sessions were less interesting than her own work: "They were sometimes good, but a lot of times boring. If there's something planned, or something to talk about, it's interesting. I never really looked forward to going to it, though."

Less of Marilyn's time was spent socializing than was true of other students, though she did make efforts to get to know people, in her typically energetic and well-organized fashion. Through one of her placements, Marilyn became interested in sponsoring a room in a home for the retarded, and she lead the students in a group fund-raising venture to support their work in redoing it. Marilyn's free time out of school was not spent with EBCE students (with the exception of her boyfriend), but primarily with old friends from George Washington. Marilyn felt that her time at the Learning Center was intended for her academic work, and when she was finished, she felt perfectly free to socialize. More often, though, she simply left.

David was a very different kind of student. "At the beginning it was great. I had [my LC] snowed. I wasn't doing anything, and I was getting praise from her. I bullshitted during the sessions in such a way that she thought I was on the ball. I liked her, but I didn't have much respect for her." David's work pattern was to coast along without doing anything until the very end, and then engage in a furious last-ditch effort. His attitude towards school attendance was quite casual: he would come in late, or not at all. Both good and bad weather were sufficient cause for non-attendance. Most of his day in-house was passed socializing, playing cards, and in other ways distracting fellow students from their work. The staff considered him to be "a behavior problem."

Eventually, it became evident to his LC that David was not going to complete the heavy credit load he had originally planned upon. The threat of non-graduation didn't disturb David, whose LC was forced to rely upon personal sanctions to enforce appropriate behavior. David and another student were playing cards at the end of the first semester, and both were behind schedule in their academic work. David recalls that "The LC came in and blasted us. 'What the hell are you doing playing cards when you're so far behind?' We ran into her office and raised hell with her: 'If you want to bitch at us then you bitch to us, and not in front of other students or to other faculty.' She apologized, and we've been a lot closer ever since. But by this time were spoiled to the system."

David's LC rates him as "very intelligent with excellent verbal skills, but his writing skills are as bad as his verbal skills are good. If he saw the necessity to have written skills he could have then in ten minutes. He would be a scholar if he could find an oral school. David will always do enough just to get by. I don't think David really likes school--even EBCE--but I believe he sees the social necessity of it now." David agrees with this assessment of his work and his attitude: "I was usually doing things for my activity sheets that really interested me. I could talk about them all day long, but I didn't like to write." Most of David's activity sheets were initiated by his LC, who would come up with the original idea, and then they would be modified by David, who decided upon the final form of the product. With regards to the Inquiry process, David said, "I don't know whether it's good or bad, because no one has ever said anything about it." He and his LC constantly disagreed on product evalution. David often felt that he had learned more than was evident, given the forms of documentation available. He felt that there was a discrepancy of 2-3 points on every activity sheet between his self-evaluation, and that of his LC. He adds: "I don't think the activity sheets are evaluated very creatively at all."

David's general choice of a "non-system" way of doing things was in reality an assertion of his individuality. His LC says, "He feels like he can really be his own person by being lazy and having a good time. I have the feeling that someday he'll be really turned on, and from then on no one will have any argument with him."

Georgia's relationships to the program changed considerably over the course of the year, with the second semester being much more casual than the first. Towards the end, she said of both her academic activities and her placements that she was "just standing still. It's been a bad semester, but I'm still going to get all A's." At the beginning of the year, she reports that she did homework all the time during her in-house days, but found since that she works much better at home. Since the time of this discovery, her attendance had become increasingly casual, although she kept up on her required work. She says of her time in-house, "unless you can find something to do, it's quite boring. Sometimes I browse through the library, practice typing, or just sit in the office and look and watch people." Although she attended most of the counseling sessions until late in the second semester, "they didn't do much for me."

Georgia had only one credit to complete for high school graduation, so much of her academic work was focussed on career awareness. She did choose to do an independent study in mathematics, essentially reviewing a course she had taken years before but had done poorly in. Her LC gave her a textbook, and every week or so she turned in two chapters worth of work. She also worked on vocabulary building in the same manner, but said that she found doing cross-word puzzles to be more useful. As an outside activity, Georgia wrote an article on a genealogical researcher, and sent it into a magazine. This was done without any thought of credit, but her LC turned it into an activity sheet. Her main concern throughout the year was to acquire experience in photography, her chosen profession, and several of her academic projects were concerned with some of its more technical aspects.

Georgia was one of the students involved in the experiment where two LC's took on extra students to bring their ratio up to 19 to one. She says of her second LC, "I never considered her as my LC. My last placement was arranged by my first LC, anyway. When my second LC tried to help me with math the way my first one had, she couldn't do it. She hated math." Georgia, in general, does not consider the quality of academics at EBCE to be very high, "but if someone really wanted to get everything out of it, they could do it. The student is the only one who could do it."

At the beginning of the 4th nine-week period, Georgia was recruited by her former LC to work on the Student Yearbook because of her photographic experience. "I ended up doing a lot of other things, like lay-out and cutting pictures. A lot of my time that shouldn't have been was taken up. It should have been a student project, but the load fell on my LC, and she chose me to do it."

Georgia's initial interest in the program was its potential for career exploration, and since her credit requirements were so minimal the academic side of the program from the beginning made little demand upon her. Of itself, the in-house program structure was capable of generating so little interest in her, that over time her relationship to EBCE became increasingly peripheral.

On Site

Marilyn's major motivation in coming to EBCE was the opportunity it presented for her to explore careers in the medical field other than her ultimate profession of nursing. However, many of her placements had her doing work which was essentially that of a nurse, but with a different occupational title. The diversity of exposure she had originally hoped for was only partially realized.

Her first experience was one week at a local laboratory where dentures are made and repaired. This placement--like almost all of Marilyn's placements--came up "through the cards," as it related to a potential career in dentistry. Because the work at the laboratory was so routine and the employees there so unenthusiastic, Marilyn said "it would have been awful to be there for more than a week." However, her RP understood the program goals of EBCE and did his best to make the experience one that would be interesting and valuable for her. He allowed her to share a good part of his day, and showed her all the steps involved in making dentures. During the week she worked at the Lab, Marilyn was simultaneously involved with an activity sheet in Physiology, dealing with teeth and the mouth. Using the reference works and the denture molds available at her site, she made a set of teeth, which formed a part of her activity sheet product.

Marilyn's second placement was at a school for retarded children, where she was the very first EBCE student to be placed. The site was recommended to her by her LC, who was aware of her interest in children. The RP's at the school insist that before EBCE students are placed there, they undergo a preliminary interview that will expose them to the severely and profoundly retarded children they will subsequently have to work with; coming in without such preparation might prove disturbing. During this interview, Marilyn was shown all the classrooms, and given the choice of room in which to work. She opted for the 3-7 year old trainables.

The school for the retarded turned out to be Marilyn's favorite site. "From being in this program I've gotten into so many other things that you could do with nursing, like being a nurse at a place like the school." She was placed there for five weeks as a teacher's aide, and worked with the children on such basic skills as toilet training, dressing, and verbal communication. It was about this time that Marilyn heard of the Home for the Retarded, and began her year-long project leading the EBCE students in reconstructing and redecorating one of its rooms.

Next, Marilyn went to work with an orthopedic surgeon, a placement that she found out about through the cards. On this placement she was allowed to observe in the office, and also made rounds with the doctor. She had to wear a nurse's uniform to work every day. On one of her first trips through the hospital with the doctor, she watched him insert a knee-pin, whereupon she fainted. "It made me think, 'Gosh, I'll never be a nurse if I pass out in a hospital', but it was just a matter of getting used to it." Nonetheless, Marilyn decided she didn't like Orthopedics. "It really made me upset."

Her fourth site also came up through the cards, and took her to the office of an oral surgeon. There was only a limited number of things for her to do there, other than watching and getting used to the operations. Eventually she was permitted to render some assistance, as by suctioning the patients. While she was there, Marilyn became interested in anesthesiology, and spoke to the two anesthesiologists the oral surgeon employed. "One really loved it: she thought it was exciting and demanding. The other hated it: she thought it was boring. You could really see the difference."

Marilyn's fifth placement turned out to be her least successful one. She went to the emergency room of a local hospital at a time when they weren't very busy. While she was able to observe a lot of minor surgery and the treatment of heart patients, she described the work as "pretty routine." During off-moments she worked on her activity sheets--which actually related to her site activities--but her RP was offended. Consequently, she received a poor evaluation on this site, although her RP, Marilyn says, "was seldom there, and evaluated me without having really seen my work."

After three weeks in the hospital emergency room, she shifted over to the pharmacy. While the people there were helpful and willing to answer any of Marilyn's questions, they didn't inquire about the EBCE program, and gave her no formal orientation to their place of work or their jobs. Most of her time there was taken up with helping in the routine work of the pharmacy: pill-sorting, inventory, and billing. She had a considerable amount of free time there, and worked on an activity sheet dealing with the effect of drugs on the reproductive system.

Next, Marilyn chose to participate in the Anthropology Workshop. She had no real notion of what she wanted to learn, but thought that the workshop would enable her to get to know some interesting people. She entered into the student discussions freely, and contributed to them quite frequently, but found it difficult to write on subjects without a textbook to follow.

Marilyn's next two placements arose out of her expressed interest in working with animals. "When I wanted to work with animals I ended up at Sunrise (Children's Museum) cleaning the cages." Her contact with the animals there was limited, her placement taking her all over the museum. She learned how to give museum tours, she worked on various exhibits in West Virginia History, and helped out on a puppet show. Marilyn considers the museum to be a good site, and although its offerings are not directly relevant to her career interests, "you can always do volunteer work at a museum." From the museum, Marilyn went to an animal hospital, a placement that she had wanted from the beginning of the year, but which had never before been open. During this placement she worked on an activity sheet that treated the procedures for animal surgery. She also helped with examinations, and on several occasions administered the anesthetic during surgery. Several young assistants were employed at the animal hospital, and Marilyn worked with them, performing the same kinds of tasks.

Marilyn's tenth and final site was at a local medical center, working with two medical photographers. She knew nothing about cameras before going there, and wanted to learn photographic basics. An RP there was previously known to her, having been a patient during one of her other hospital placements. He and his co-worker were not excessively busy while Marilyn was with them, and so had a lot of time to spare for her. She was given two Kodak pamphlets--self teaching courses in photography and darkroom work--and "I really learned a lot from it." The facilities of the darkroom and the expertise of the photographers were made freely accessible to her, and although little medical data was involved, Marilyn notes "it's really getting me into photography as a hobby."

Marilyn's LC says of these site experiences: "She has had some very unique experiences at job sites. Even at sites that have not worked out well for students in the past, she has gotten something of value. She's looked at all kinds of nursing, and has done very well in every one of them. Of course, Marilyn is very outgoing, and can make people do things for her, so she can make these sites into positive experiences. All in all, the program has helped Marilyn reinforce her career choice. She knows now that she is going to be very happy as a nurse."

David's first placement was for four weeks at the emergency room of a local hospital. The career card had indicated an interest in nursing, and, in fact, a hospital was a familiar environment for him, one that he enjoyed. His mother was employed as a nurse, so David had spent a great deal of time at the hospital where she worked. Even so, David reported that "going out to the site the first time scared the shit out of me. I wasn't sure how I was supposed to act, how I was supposed to respond to certain people." After an initial period of adjustment, David found the placement "very neat. I enjoyed it. The people were really friendly there. I was wheeling patients around, flirting with young nurses, cleaning wounds, doing all kinds of things." His RP was the head of the emergency room, and David found her fairly well informed about his purpose there as an EBCE student. He learned about job opportunities and educational requirements from the staff there, though, of course, he was already familiar with certain careers within the medical field. He said, "One of the neat things about hospitals is that they don't give you this stuff about having experience." Going into a "hospital-type" career is a distinct possibility for him now.

The second placement again related to medicine; he spent another four weeks in the lab of a different hospital, working in the Bacteriology Department. He learned to smear plates, stain slides, and generally help with the lab work. "Once I was taking a count on some kind of organism, but I turned out to be totally wrong, so I gave that up. If I were doing it as a part of a team, I'd slow things down considerably." When asked whether he had learned anything from the placement, David commented, "Yes, I learned a good deal. I didn't absorb any of it, but it was in my brain for a while."

David enjoyed the placement because he related well to the people he worked with, mostly students who were in training at the lab. His RP was Laboratory Head, but he saw her rarely. This was partly his own fault; he avoided seeing her for fear that she would insist upon his receiving a varied experience and move him to another part of the lab. His enjoyment of the site derived almost wholly from the quality of his social interaction there, and he had little desire to explore the career any further. "That career didn't interest me because you deal entirely with fellow workers, not with patients. . . The thing that really bothered me was the white jacket and tie."

Despite his positive feeling about the people at this site, David's attendance there was poor. He estimated that he missed about one-fourth of the scheduled days. "I enjoyed it but the weather was really foul." His absences were not consistently reported to David's LC, but his RP at the site evaluated his ability to accept responsibility as poor.

David's next placement lead him to explore the recreation field, another of the career interest areas indicated by the card sort. The site was a local Recreation Center, where he was placed in the Art Department. He assisted the head of that department, and worked mostly in Arts and Crafts for elderly people. Much of his time at the Rec Center was free, and he spent it playing ping-pong, shooting billiards, and just talking to people, the majority of whom were black male teenagers. David found himself in situations which were "totally foreign to me. I gained an insight into the way they were. Their ways of talking and their mannerisms were totally different from anything I was used to. After a while I just started jiving along with them." This experience increased his feeling of self-confidence about walking into new situations.

The Rec Center placement was very successful. David had easy and familiar relations with his RP, who was Director for the Center. Although he wasn't working directly with his RP, he felt comfortable walking into his office to talk. His attendance record over a period of six weeks was very good. He became aware, during this time, of the growing job opportunities in the recreation field, and is now considering the possibility of entering an allied area. "I might do nursing because I like hospital life, the surroundings, and I might do recreation because I like outdoor activities."

David next requested to be placed at the Sunrise Children's Museum. Although the placement is relevant to his interest in recreation, his main information about the site came from "general osmosis--just hearing about it all the time at school." The first three week placement was with the Director of Exhibits, and David helped in setting them up. The painting, cutting and gluing he did "wasn't spiritually fulfilling, but I liked my RP." He enjoyed doing work for children, rather than adults, because the children are less critical.

The atmosphere at the Children's Museum is quite informal, and again David responded well to the congeniality of the environment. He asked for a renewal of his placement, and began to work with the Museum Extension Program. Part of this program involves a small travelling Children's Zoo; the animals are taken to schools and other places where the children are presented with a short informational talk. David became involved with caring for the animals, and often accompanied this and other travelling shows.

This aspect of the placement was especially valuable for David. He willingly accepted the responsibilities given him. His RP, an enthusiastic and energetic woman, encouraged him in many ways. He travelled with her and a Sensemobile Program to a meeting of librarians in another town. In addition to the career experience they provided, David adds, the meetings "came at the time when my attitude toward older people was changing so I could see them as human beings." This seems to be representative of a change in many of David's attitudes that occurred at this time. His LC noted that David's attitude toward the program had become more positive.

Another important experience connected to his museum placement was David's attendance at a convention of Naturalists. He accompanied his RP there, and wound up with academic credit: "She (the RP) is always coming up with ways of getting credit out of things." This was the first time David had been to a convention, and was impressed to find himself mixing socially with officers of the Naturalists' Association. This event sparked an interest in pursuing career opportunities in Parks and Forestry.

When not involved in the extension program tours, David occasionally guided groups around the major museum exhibits. He recalled that once he lead a group of college history majors on a tour of an exhibit of armor. "I was so paranoid, so self-conscious. I really botched it." Generally, David enjoyed doing the exhibit tours, but found it difficult to face an audience he perceived as both knowledgeable and critical.

David left the Sunrise Museum placement for two weeks, in order to participate in the Anthropology Workshop. He was interested in finding out about a discipline which seemed exotic to him. He enjoyed the discussions with the investigators and other students, and remarked, "I learned a lot of neat stuff, but I didn't get a lot down on paper." He had a quick grasp of new ideas, and often showed some capacity for analysis. The amount of education necessary to be an anthropologist made this career uninteresting to him.

The final placement was in marked contrast to his previous experiences. Following up his interest in recreation, he spent two weeks at the YMCA, working around the swimming pool. He enjoyed the activity at this site, but had a serious conflict with the RP. Many of the people using the facility were members of the anti-textbook faction, who were boycotting regular schools, and had set up splinter schools as alternatives, for which they needed physical education facilities. David's RP made some private remarks to him about these patrons, at which he took offense, and decided not to return to the site. When he attempted to inform his RP that he wouldn't be back, it was impossible to reach him, so David simply left a note. David's LC was disturbed about the abrupt way the placement was terminated, but agreed with his decision to leave.

Georgia began her placement career with a site related to her expressed career interest in photography. She went to a multiple-listing agency to work with their photographer, who maintained a fully-equiped darkroom, and who was willing to provide her with direction in taking photographs, as well as darkroom procedures. His job involved photographing all the properties listed through the agency, which meant long drives to the various houses. "All the driving was boring, but we had a common interest, and it was nice to be able to talk."

The RP at this site was very helpful. "He taught me a lot, especially in the darkroom." He took an interest in helping Georgia develop her technical skills, and gave her projects and other work to be done in the darkroom on her own.

After two weeks at this site, she selected another placement for the different perspective it would give her on photography. This was a local radio and TV station, and her RP there was a commercial artist. Georgia's work on photography at this site was limited, but she said, "I sure learned a lot--maybe not the things I went there for, but a lot." She helped make posters, watch the videotaping process, and observed the news being filmed each day. "I learned a bit about the workings of a TV station. I'm not really interested in it now, but it's something I'll look into in school."

Although other students had found it difficult to work with RP's at this station because of their busy schedules, Georgia did not have this problem. Her RP always found time for her. "Anything I showed an interest in, he always tried to show me a little bit of it." He was acquainted with the purpose of the EBCE program, and tried to make her experiences relevant to her interests.

Georgia's next placement was with a newspaper agency, where she stayed for six weeks. She went out with their staff photographers, took pictures with them, and was able to use their darkroom whenever it was free. She was given a photo assignment to do independently, and the experience was rewarding, even though her negatives were unfortunately destroyed in the darkroom. "I could do anything. They really didn't have time to sit down and explain. They told me to go ahead and explore, but they would answer any questions I had."

Since it had been "a very good experience," Georgia chose to return to the agency later in the year. "The second time was very different. The photographers really didn't have time, and I ended up sitting a lot. For some reason I just couldn't speak up this time." So she went to the Sunday Magazine editor, who had given her a brief orientation on her first visit before introducing her to the photography section. She told him that she had very little to do, and "he decided to play teacher. He gave me tests on photography and the camera. I thought I knew about the camera, but it turned out that I didn't understand about lighting, the lens, focal length, different types of films." The photographers had suggested more study, because she didn't know enough to receive criticism of her photos, so she also studied and was tested on composition.

"He always tried to get me to read things. He sent me to the library with a list of books. I couldn't do it at first. I couldn't understand what was going on unless I had a photograph right there--which I did a couple of times. He taught me to read and learn."

Georgia's father had previously been employed at this agency, and the RP was acquainted with her family. "I had to work harder. I didn't want to let him down. He really admired me and helped me. I could have refused to read, but I didn't want to."

Georgia's next placement was requested for reasons other than career exploration. The site was Mountain Artisans, a mountain crafts factory. "I wasn't real sure what I wanted to do. I like to sew. At the time I was making a quilt." Initially, Georgia wasn't happy with the work she was doing there. "A lot of people [students] got juggled around, whatever they needed them for. I didn't do it--I spoke up. It was hard to do it, but I wasn't about to sit and file all day." She mentioned her dissatisfaction to one of the staff she spent time with, and was given more interesting work. She cut patterns, tried on clothes, and did some modeling. She was allowed to embroider a dress, and "[the RP] just loved it--that made me feel good." She also learned about designing her own patterns for clothes. "I probably could do it if I put my mind to it."

Georgia "had a lot of fun with another student who was there, and with two women [staff members] who had great personalities." She concludes of her experience there, "I didn't really learn much--I just had a good time."

Following this placement, Georgia spent a period in-house, of which she confided, "I felt like I needed to be in-house because I was tired of going out every day." After this time she was placed in the Anthropology Workshop, originally to work with one of the investigators, who is a photographer. However, she shortly became involved in the student discussions. "I learned a lot, really, but not too much about Anthropology. Mostly I learned about people. Every job site you learn mainly about the person related to his or her job." Georgia is a very thoughtful person, but was content to listen and watch most of the time.

After her second placement at the newspaper agency she requested the YWCA for two weeks. She went "because I wanted to go swimming. I wanted to get some exercise." There, she participated in swimming and yoga classes, and helped with the nursery. She also wrote an article about her RP, which she turned in for English credit. She concludes about this site experience, "It wasn't much. In fact, there's nothing really to say about it."

Clearly, Georgia made many important decisions as to how her EBCE program would be structured, but she sees little difference in herself as a result of the year's expereince. "This program let me do it--it was all on my part. I learned a lot about people and how they relate to their job, how businesses are run. A person would develop a lot of responsibility in this program, but I think I already had it."

It is important to emphasize that the three students whose case histories have been presented in this section were not randomly chosen. They were largely self-selected, since they opted to participate in the Anthropology Workshop, and it was in this way that we as investigators became familiar with their opinions and attitudes. They demonstrate a diversity of motivations in applying to AEL, in the initial specificity of their career preferences, in their attitudes towards academic work, in their relationship to the informal social structure of EBCE, and in their commitment to its ideological goals. There were other student "paths" which we were much less successful in observing closely: those who chose to attend their in-house days very infrequently (regardless of their behavior on site), and those who responded negatively to the personal styles of the investigators.

One of the interesting results of the interviews and discussions with these and other students is their general feeling that a year of participation in EBCE has caused little change in them. This would seem to contradict the observations of their LC's, and those of the investigators, which indicate that specific changes have, in fact, occurred. The students, over time, tend to become tolerant of many new adult styles. There is an increase in the competence and the self-confidence with which they deal with adults in novel situations. They learn the necessity and the burden of assuming the responsibility for their own lives. And, they acquire a feeling of self-importance after an entire year of dealing with their LC's on a personal basis and having some power of choice regarding their activities.

There is also no doubt that they attain some measure of career maturity. They become increasingly aware of their own preferences for job environments, and they understand that job satisfaction is often dependent upon the degree to which these highly personal preferences are met. A few students have also recognized that corporate and business structures affect the interpersonal relationships among employees that they consider to be so significant. Almost every student has encountered a wide range of employee attitudes toward jobs--the highly motivated and enthusiastic as well as the extremely bored and alienated--and they begin to realize some of the many variations that are possible in following any given career.

These changes are not considered to be of great consequence by the students, if they are aware of them at all. They are learning so quickly, and in so many areas, that the overall process is invisible. Traditional schooling has not taught them how to evaluate the intangibles of growth, so that even after a whole year at EBCE they still do not know just how much they know.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

This report is directed primarily towards those who are considering replicating the Charleston EBCE program in their own school systems, or who have already done so and are now faced with the difficulties of its everyday operation. Our analysis has, therefore, been systemic, but our perspective has consistently been that of the students at EBCE. We have, however, not been concerned with the "average" or "typical" student, but with an idiosyncratic, unique aggregate of specific individuals. We hope that in our effort to generalize we have not been guilty of violence to the diverse reality we observed.

Throughout the course of our investigation we found ourselves asking a single evaluative question that, at successive points in time, we would phrase in different ways: "What makes for a successful EBCE student? (and how does one define "success"?)"; "What factors lead a student to take maximal (or minimal) advantage of the opportunities provided by EBCE?"; "What are the various "paths" students may take through the EBCE program structure, and what determines the level of student satisfaction with the "path" that has been chosen?"

As our phrasing became more and more relativistic, our evaluative standards became increasingly student-specific. Finally, we ceased to ask, "What determines the level of student performance?", and began to consider the factors that influenced students' attitudes towards the EBCE program and their participation in it.

Our conclusions have been incorporated into our analysis. They appear in the body of our report, and it is not our intention to repeat them all in this section. We would, however, like to highlight specific problems, issues, questions, and speculations that might be relevant to the concerns of EBCE replicators. These fall into five broad categories, all of which affect the student's perception of, and path through, the EBCE program: the student's attitude towards the program at the time of entry; the student-LC relationship; academic work; in-house activities; and placements.

Student Attitudes and Perspectives

It must be expected that the students accepted into the EBCE program will exhibit a wide variety of motivation sets. Inevitably, there will be a group of students who see EBCE as a way of escaping the constraints of the traditional classroom, and who will use their freedom from these restrictions to avoid academic or other work. The program can either attempt to select out such students by means such as initial interviewing, or else it can accommodate them in the hope of recapturing their interest.

The student's interest in school is profoundly affected by the informal social patterns that evolve as the program year progresses. Student group processes also influence individuals' conceptions of the program, their information about experience sites, their perceptions of academic possibilities, and their strategies for solving, or avoiding, problems. The location of the Learning Center is of significance in this regard, because it structures the relations among and within student groups. Placing the Center in a neutral zone, such as McGwigan School makes attendance a novel experience for all the students, who enter on an equal footing. There are not pre-existing cliques or groups, and no initial hierarchies. Were the Center to be located within a high school, this advantage could be lost. The patterns that would emerge are not wholly predictable, but the possibility should be considered that students coming in from other high schools might consider themselves "trespassers" on another group's "turf", and form tight groups as a defensive measure. Depending upon the distribution of racial and class groups among the home high schools, social interaction might become hostile, and inter-group conflict is a possibility. Those students who remain in their own high school, but as part of the EBCE Center might tend to remain associated with social groups and activities they are already familiar with, and they might be insufficiently involved in the new program. For some potential drop-outs, EBCE is a "fresh start" that has little real chance of success unless they are completely removed from the social environment associated with their failure-prone academic habits. One student reported that in his home high school "there were too many 'bad elements' who skip classes, get drunk, get stoned and get in trouble. If EBCE were there, I would probably drop out. Those people would still be around to distract me.

The Student-LC Relationship

The LC is involved--directly or indirectly--in virtually every phase of the student's program at EBCE, and it is essential that their relationship be based on mutual trust and respect. For this reason it is valuable to have a diverse staff; if students feel free to change their LC's they will probably find suitable matches to their styles of personal interaction. This might circumvent many unnecessary conflicts.

A certain level of conflict, however, appears to be a part of the relationship that many students establish with their LC's. When students come from a school culture which relies heavily upon the use of disciplinary sanctions, the adaptation to a new system may be difficult. Many are easily integrated into a system where responsibility derives from personal relations with their LC's or RP's. Some, accustomed to expulsion from school and irate discussions with authority figures, will find it easy to ignore the relatively mild admonitions of an LC. Such students appear to need a much firmer criticism, so that they understand which behaviors and attitudes are inappropriate and unacceptable. A supposed authority figure who can't "keep them in line" will soon lose their respect.

A good personal relationship with a student, however, is no guarantee that the LC will be a good teacher. LC's tend to regard their academic competence as restricted to those areas in which they have specialized. Students are occasionally critical of the staff for falling short of an idealized, all-purpose information source. At the same time, though, they begin to see teachers as persons with real shortcomings and special aptitudes, who are able honestly to admit their limits. The LC's attitude also has an effect upon the scope of the academic program available to students. Theoretically, students should be able to consult any LC for help in special areas; actually, they are often reluctant to ask for assistance from someone with whom they generally have little contact.

Academics

Adolescents of high school age are not noted for their patience. They tend to make quick judgments on very limited experience, and so it is important to make their initial experience with the program as positive and as interesting as possible. All students reported an unfavorable reaction to the Orientation period, ranging from confusion to immediate alienation. During this time they were given material which was meaningless because it was not interpretable in terms of any real experience.

During Orientation, too, the students were introduced to the "Inquiry Method," which was constructed by the AEL Development staff to aid students and LC's in gaining increased comprehension of the learning process. It is little used by either. Its daily implementation is almost entirely restricted to the selection of the correct "step" number for each activity listed on the activity sheet. In the present program (as of Spring 1975), it was not used to monitor or to guide student academic progress.

The evaluation of student performance in academic matters is influenced by the heavy work load of the LC. Student products are often perfunctorily scanned, which leads students to be concerned primarily with getting things done, and handed in, regardless of quality. Some students don't bother to read the LC evaluations of their work, or even to discuss what they have done with their LC after their work has been returned. There is very little real feedback about quality, and the point system that is used seems to result in an emphasis on quantity of work.

In-House Activities

Students found the tests and indicators which they took at the beginning of the year (and later during counseling sessions) to be interesting only insofar as they uncovered new definitions of themselves. They were less concerned with thinking out the implications of such profiles, or in abstract discussion of their meaning.

Although counseling at an individual level was important to many students, they soon found the scheduled counseling sessions boring and of little value to them. Their participation was minimal, even when they attended, and only rarely did the discussions become animated. Much of the difficulty was due to the students' disregard of discussion not immediately applicable to actual experience; their patience for abstraction and generalization was extremely limited. Also, because there was little sense of group unity, informal discussions--particularly about personal topics--were uncomfortable for many.

Other than the counseling sessions and the brief meeting with the LC, the in-house day was quite loosely structured. It eventually became boring for most students, who found socializing more interesting than any other activity, and indulged in it more frequently. Only when faced with deadline ultimata from their LC's would some students do work in-house. There are many possible ways of dealing with this problem. More severe discipline by the staff might be employed, but AEL students would see this strategy as destructive to their sense of independence and self-responsibility. Another possibility would be to schedule lectures, workshops, meetings with RP's, movies and so on into the daily schedule, in the same way that the afternoon seminars were held. A final option is to accept the students' right to make both good and bad decisions about their work, and truly allow them to be responsible for their own success or failure. Under the present system, the LC's take upon their shoulders much of the responsibility that is nominally the students'. They nag and cajole when work is overdue, and tend to protect students from the negative consequences of their decisions.

Not all student experience in-house or at resource sites can be positive. LC's and RP's may be distracted or otherwise occupied; there may be a clash of personalities; the work the student is given to do may be boring, or menial, or simply other than what was anticipated. The unfortunate experience with the resource site phase of the AEL program is the exception rather than the rule, however, and resource site experience is without doubt the most successful feature of the program. Improvement of the resource site experience could be accomplished in-house through better organization of site scheduling and selection, as suggested below.

To begin with, the organizational response to a student placement request is quite cumbersome. Waiting lists for sites, and lengthy delays in the commencement of placements will frustrate the student and reduce his sense of having the power of choice in setting up his own program.

A more critical problem is the incomplete relation and matching of academics to the placement side of the program. Examination of files of student activity sheets revealed that LC's made a constant effort to accomplish this. They were hampered, however, by their own incomplete information about actual student activities on-site. This problem was noted by the staff, and, throughout the year, continual efforts to improve "blending" and to increase the frequency of site visits were made. Nevertheless, only a few of the LC's met with any real measure of success. This is partly due to the heavy paperwork load the LC's faced, which reduced the time available to them for site visits. However, the efficiency of the site visits that were made could have been improved if LC's spent their time on-site talking with the actual RP the student worked with, rather than with the Contact Person in large institutions.

Placements

Although the AEL program has a definite "placement focus," the program procedures designed to provide students with information about sites are not wholly attuned to the student perspective. The Learning Guides, and the Experience Site Access System (which is, at least initially, an extremely valuable tool), are well-designed, but students view them as "packaged" sources of information. They will respond to these "packages" if no alternatives are available, but prefer more "personal" sources of information, and seek them out whenever possible. In similar fashion, students consider the Career Guides (which are designed to structure some part of their site experience) to embody "packaged" learning, and are reluctant to attribute any value to them. They do not wish to constrain their on-site activities in this manner.

The pool of employer sites at which students are placed has a definite under-representation of sites in the professional/creative fields. However, the existing pool is quite representative of job possibilities as they exist today in Charleston (with the unavoidable exception of Labor Union sites involving Hazardous Occupations and Child Labor Laws). EBCE students are thus introduced quite early to the limitations and the strengths of their community as a place to work.

Their participation in the program is of value to them in giving a decided advantage over their contemporaries on the job market. Both students and RP's see EBCE as a kind of placement service, and it is estimated that 40-45% of the graduating class each year finds jobs as a result of contacts made during site experiences.* The remaining EBCE students have had a whole year of different hands-on job experiences, which will be of value in finding jobs later on.

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*This is supported by evidence gained during the external evaluation interviews with Resource Persons. Of the RP's interviewed, 37% said that former students of EBCE had been hired at their sites.

Because of the incomplete blending of academic pursuits and site experiences, students emerged from their introduction to the world of work without any holistic notion about the structure of the community's economic system, and their own relation to it. They knew very little about the functions and purposes of labor unions and professional organizations; they did not perceive the important social role played by the corporation in the life of the community. EBCE students in Charleston were introduced only to a few aspects of what it means to be employed; they know something about what people do on their jobs, but little about income tax, social security or insurance -- though they did acquire some expertise in the art of filling out forms.

The accomplishments of the AEL staff in developing a system which provides Kanawha County youth with an opportunity for valuable and intensive exposure to the world of work are commendable. This exposure is incomplete, as we have indicated, but this is a consequence of the staff need to deal with the regional perspective and educational climate in the county rather than lack of staff vision. As the acceptance grows within the county and region of the alternate program developed by AEL, the program itself should grow to provide for a more complete career exposure.